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NARRATIVE

OF A

REMARKABLE TRANSACTION

IN THE EARLY LIFE OF

JOHN WESLEY.

FROM AN ORIGINAL MANUSCRIPT

IN HIS OWN HANDWRITING, NEVER BEFORE PUBLISHED.

SECOND EDITION.

TO WHICH IS ADDED,

A REVIEW OF THE WORK,

BY THE LATE

REV. JOSEPH HUNTER, F.S.A., &c.

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LONDON:
PRINTED BY F. PICKTON,
PERRY'S PLACE, 29, OXFORD STREET.

HR 4857

PRELIMINARY REMARKS.

It has been stated in the title-page that the following Narrative is authenticated by J. Wesley's own hand-writing; but the poetry appended to the Manuscript (which is a summary of the whole affair), is all that remains of the Original, the body of the work being a copy only. In further confirmation of the genuineness of this curious Tract it may be added, that the subordinate particulars tally, in a remarkable manner, with his own printed Journal, in illustration of which, it will suffice to confine ourselves to the first six pages of the Narrative.

Herein he observes, Paragraph I, that he was in London in June, 1748; in the Journal, "that he preached in Moor-fields;" and "on Sunday, 19th, the congregation in Moor-fields was greatly increased." (Vol. II. p. 61.)

Again, in Paragraph II, that "in August following he was taken ill at Newcastle;" in the Journal, "August 5, 1748, I preached about noon, at Horsley. As I rode home I found my head-ache increase much."

"Saturday 6th, the pain was much worse than before." (Vol. II. p. 67.)

In Paragraph VIII. of the Narrative, "We (*i.e.* himself and Grace Murray) passed several months together in Ireland." According to his Journal he was in Ireland from 15th April to 20th July, 1749.

In Paragraph X., "We returned together to Bristol." "July 20th, 1749," says the Journal, "on Monday morning we landed on the quay at Bristol." (Vol. II. p. 111.)

In Paragraph XVI. he proceeds to say that, "We came to Newcastle the same evening (Sept. 6th). The next day I wrote to

J. Bennet, as follows:" This is the sensible and temperate letter contained in pp. 8-10, and dated, of course, Newcastle-upon-Tyne, Sept. 7, 1749;—and in the Journal we read, "Sept. 6, 1749, I reached Newcastle, and after resting a day, and preaching two evenings and two mornings, with such blessing as we have not often found, on Friday set out to visit the Northern Societies," which coincides with the Narrative, Paragraph XVIII. "Friday, Sept. 8th, we set out for Berwick, visiting all the intermediate Societies." We find, however, the name of John Bennet once only in the Journal, October 18, 1749. (Vol. II. p. 123.)

To enumerate other coincidences, were supererogatory; but it may be added, that shortly after the unexpected union of Grace Murray with J. Bennet, John Wesley formed a matrimonial alliance with a lady of independent fortune, after having consulted one Mrs. P. upon this important step.

In his Journal he announces his determination in the following words:—

"Feb. 2, 1751. Having received a full answer from Mr. P—, I was clearly convinced that I ought to marry. For many years I remained single, because I believed I could be more useful in a single than in a married state; and I praise God, who enabled me to do so."

"I now as fully believed that in my present circumstcnaes I might be more useful in a married state, into which, upon a clear conviction and by the advice of my friends, I entered a few days after." (Vol. II. p. 179.)

C. HOOK.

4, Southampton Street, Camden Town.

The First Edition of this narrative was published in 1848, but being out of print, I have been induced to reprint it, in consequence of having found among some manuscripts I lately purchased of the Executor of the late Rev. Joseph Hunter, F.S.A. author of the *Histories of Hallamshire, South Yorkshire*, and many other esteemed historical and biographical works,—a Review of the work, in which he gives some particulars of the Manuscript about which the late Mr. Hook was less explicit than was perhaps warranted.

Sept. 20, 1861. J. R. S.

NARRATIVE

OF THE

REV. JOHN WESLEY.

WHAT THOU DOST, I KNOW NOT NOW, BUT I SHALL KNOW HEREAFTER.

I. In June, 1748, we had a conference in London; several of our brethren then objected to the thoughts upon marriage, and in a full and friendly debate convinced me that a believer might marry without suffering loss in his soul.

II. In August following I was taken ill at Newcastle: Grace Murray attended me continually. I observed her more narrowly than ever before, both as to her temper, sense, and behaviour. I esteemed and loved her more and more; and, when I was a little recovered, I told her, sliding into it I know not how, "If ever I marry, I think you will be the person." After some time I spoke to her more directly. She seemed utterly amazed, and said, "This is too great a blessing for me; I can't tell how to believe it. This is all I could have wished for under heaven, if I had dared to wish for it."

III. From that time I conversed with her as my own. The night before I left Newcastle, I told her, "I am convinced God has called you to be my fellow-labourer in the gospel. I will take you with me to Ireland in Spring. Now we must part for a time, but, if we meet again, I trust we shall part no more." She begged we might not part so soon, saying, "It was more than she could bear." Upon which I took her with me through Yorkshire and Derbyshire, where she was unspeakably useful both to me and to the Societies. I left her in Cheshire with John Bennet, and went on my way rejoicing.

IV. Not long after, I received a letter from J. Bennet, and another from her. He desired my consent to marry her. She said "She believed it was the will of God." Hence I date her fall. Here was the first false step, which God permitted indeed, but not approved. I was utterly amazed, but wrote a mild answer to both, supposing they were married already. She replied in so affectionate a manner, that I thought the whole design was at an end.

V. John Bennet afterwards told me, that on the very night after

he had engaged to G. M., just after he lay down in bed and before he had slept at all, he saw her sitting as in deep distress. In the morning, instead of writing to me, he asked her, "Is there not a contract between you and Mr. W.?" Partly out of love to him, partly out of fear of exposing me, she replied, "There is not." This was doubtless another false step. He that standeth, let him take heed lest he fall!

VI. She felt the effects of this all the winter, being under racking uncertainty of mind. When she received a letter from me, she resolved to live and die with me, and wrote to me just what she felt. When she heard from him, her affection for him revived, and she wrote to him in the tenderest manner. In February particularly, she sent him word, "That if he loved her, he should meet her at Sheffield, for she was sent for to Ireland; and, if he did not come now, she could not answer for what might follow."

One cannot excuse her behaviour in all this time. Doubtless she should have renounced the one or other. But those who know human nature will pity her much; at least, as much as they will blame her.

VII. J. Bennet determined to meet her at Sheffield; but, just as he was taking horse, one brought him word, that his brother-in-law was dead, and he must come away directly. So Grace Murray, seeing nothing of him, came on to Bristol. There I talked with her at large. She told me what had passed between her and J. Bennet, and seemed to think that contract was binding, but she was quite convinced it was not when I reminded her of what had passed before between her and me, adding that "till now all this had seemed to her a dream; nor could she possibly think, what I proposed would ever come to pass, and that the difficulty was the greater, because she could not consult with any living soul, for fear of betraying or displeasing me."

VIII. We passed several months together in Ireland. I saw the work of God prosper in her hands: she lightened my burden more than can be expressed. She examined all the women in the smaller Societies and the believers in every place. She settled all the women-bands, visited the sick, prayed with the mourners, more and more of whom received remission of sins, during her conversation or prayer. Meantime she was to me both a servant and friend, as well as a fellow-labourer in the gospel. She provided everything I wanted. She told me with all faithfulness and freedom, if she thought anything amiss in my behaviour; and (what I never saw in any other to this day), she knew how to reconcile the utmost plainness of speech with such deep esteem and respect, as I often trembled at, not thinking it was due to any creature, and to join with the most exquisite modesty a tenderness not to be expressed.

IX. The more we conversed together, the more I loved her; and, before I returned from Ireland we contracted by a contract *de præsenti*. All this while she neither wrote to J. Bennet, nor he to her; so the affair between them was as if it had never been.

X. We returned together to Bristol. It was there or at Kingswood that she heard some idle tales concerning me and Molly Francis. They were so plausibly related that she believed them, and in a sudden vehement fit of jealousy wrote a loving letter to John Bennet. Of this she told me next day in great agony of mind; but it was too late; his passion revived, and he wrote her word "he would meet her when she came into the North."

XI. We came to London. Talking with an intimate acquaintance there, she hinted at a distance, that Mr. W. loved her. E. Md. replied, "Sister M., never think of it. I know you thro'ly. It would never do. The people here would not suffer you; and your spirit would not bear their behaviour. You have not humility enough, or meekness, or patience. You would be miserable all your life, and that would make him miserable too; so that instead of strengthening, you would weaken his hands. If you love yourself, or if you love him, never think of it more."

XII. This sunk deep, and the more, because she durst not tell me of it. Soon after we set out for the North. At Epsworth, in Lancashire, J. Bennet met us. I was beginning to speak to him freely. But when he told me, "she had sent him all my letters," with several other circumstances of the same kind, all which I then believed to be true, I stopped and said no more. I saw, if these things were so, he had the best right to her; so I thought it better to bear the blame than to lessen his affection for her. I judged it right that they should marry without delay, and wrote her word in the morning, "I thought it was not proper she and I should converse any more together."

XIII. She ran to me in an agony of tears, and begged me "not to talk so, unless I designed to kill her." She uttered many other tender expressions. I was distressed exceedingly. Before I was recovered, J. Bennet came in. He claimed her as his right. I was stunned and knew not what to say, still thinking, "She loves him best; and why should I speak, to lay a ground of future uneasiness between them?" Compassion, likewise, and love to her, swayed me much, observing she was sorrowful almost to death, and fearing if each insist on his claim it will be cutting her in sunder. She can never survive it; she will die in the contest. So I again determined to give her up.

XIV. In this purpose I went home. I felt no anger, no murmuring, or repining; but deep anguish of spirit from a piercing conviction of the irreparable loss I had sustained. I had no design

to converse with her any more, but, about two, one brought me word, "Sister Murray is exceeding ill; she is obliged to keep her bed." I then believed it right to visit her. When I came, she told me in plain terms, "My dear Sir, how can you possibly think I love any other better than you! I love you a thousand times better than I ever loved J. B. in my life. But I am afraid if I don't marry him he will run mad." She showed a letter he had just sent her which confirmed that fear. In the evening he came himself; and then he on the one side and David Trathen on the other, continued urging her, telling her they would not go all night unless they had an answer, till at length she said, "I will marry J. Bennet."

XV. The next morning she told me what had passed. I was more perplexed than ever. As I now knew she loved me, and as she was contracted to me before, I knew not whether I ought to let her go. For several days I was utterly unresolved, till on Wednesday, Sept. 6th, I put it home to herself, "Which will you choose?" she declared again and again, "I am determined by conscience as well as inclination to live and die with you."

XVI. We came to Newcastle the same evening. The next day I wrote to J. Bennet as follows:—

NEWCASTLE-UPON-TYNE, *Sept.* 7, 1749.

MY DEAR BROTHER,

1. The friendship between you and me has continued long. I pray God it may continue to our lives' end.

But if I love you, I must deal plainly with you; and surely you desire I should. Oh! that you would consider what I say with meekness and love, and with earnest continual prayer to God.

2. You expressed a willingness, some years ago, to be one of my helpers in the work of the gospel. I gladly received you into the number, and you objected to none of the rules whereby they act; if you had, you might have continued at your own place, in friendship, though not in union, with me.

3. As one of my helpers, I desired you, three years ago, to assist me at Newcastle. In my house there I had placed a servant, whom I had tried several years, and found faithful in all things. Therefore I trusted her in the highest degree, and put her in the highest office that any woman can bear amongst us.

4. Both by the nature and rules of your office you were engaged to do nothing of importance without consulting me. She was likewise engaged by the very nature of hers, as well as by the confidence I reposed in her, to consult me in all things; to take no step of any moment without my knowledge and consent. Over and above which, she was peculiarly engaged hereto by her own voluntary and express promise.

5. Notwithstanding this, you were scarcely out of my house when, without ever consulting me, you solicited her to take a step of the last importance, without my consent or knowledge. You, whom I had trusted in all things,

thus betrayed your trust, and moved her to do so too. You, to whom I had done no wrong, wronged me, and that in an uncommon manner. You endeavoured, at a time when I least expected it, to rob me of a most faithful and most useful servant; the fellow, to whom for the work committed to her care, I knew not whom to find in the three kingdoms.

6. Last Autumn I observed her more narrowly, and perceived she was such a person as I had in vain sought for many years, and then determined never to part with. I told her this, but told her withal, "I could not as yet proceed any farther, because I could do nothing without consulting my brother, as he had done nothing without consulting me." She answered, "It was so great a blessing that she knew not how to believe it; it seemed all as a dream." I repeated it again, and there was no shadow of objection made.

7. I told her farther, "I am convinced it is not the will of God that you should be shut up in a corner; I am convinced you ought to labour with me in the gospel. I therefore design to take you to Ireland in Spring. Now we must separate for a season, but if we meet again I trust we shall part no more." And from this time I looked upon her as my own, and resolved that nothing but death should part us.

8. Three days after I left her, you, without ever consulting me, solicited her again, and in a few days more prevailed upon her to comply and promise marriage to you.

9. That very night God warned you, in a vision or dream, of one who had a prior right, but whom at your instance she pushed away, yet you construed it in quite another manner.

10. However, thus far you went: you asked her, instead of me, whether there was "any such engagement." Partly out of fear, partly out of love blinding her eyes, she replied "there was not." And 'tis true there was not so explicit an engagement as would stand good in law, but such an one there was as ought in conscience to have prevented any other, till it should be dissolved.

11. Upon her return from Ireland, God again interposed by means of those who were near you, but you construed this likewise your own way. You rushed forward, and by vehement importunity forced her tender and compassionate mind to promise you again.

12. Now, my brother, pray earnestly to God that he would show you and me what is right in this matter. Was not your very first step wrong? Was it acting faithfully, even as a friend, to move such a thing without my consent and knowledge? Was it not much more wrong, considering you as an helper? who as such ought to do nothing without my advice. Were you not hereby tempting her likewise to do extremely wrong, who was engaged not only as a friend, but much more as a housekeeper, to take no step without first consulting me? Was not all this unjust and unkind, as well as treacherous and unfaithful?

13. Was the second step any better than the first? The soliciting her in Derbyshire to act without the consent of a father, and more than a father? The endeavouring to rob your brother and your friend of his faithful servant, of the fellow-labourer in the gospel whom he had been forming to his hand for ten years? Was this consistent either with gratitude or friendship? Nay, with common justice or humanity?

14. Was the third step any better than the rest, the extorting that second promise? I doubt still whether a thousand promises can bind to a thing evil and wrong in itself. Oh! that you would take Scripture and reason for your rule, instead of blind and impetuous passsion! I can say no more,—only this—you may tear her away by violence, but my consent I cannot, dare not give: nor I fear can God give you His blessing.

This Wm. Shent promised to deliver with his own hand, but it was not delivered at all.

XVII. In the afternoon, without any importunity or constraint, she wrote a letter to John Bennet. The purport of it was, "That she was more and more convinced both he and she had sinned against God, in entering on any engagement at all without Mr. W.'s knowledge and consent."

XVIII. Friday, Sept. 8th, we set out for Berwick, visiting all the intermediate Societies. Every hour gave me fresh proof of her usefulness on the one hand and her affection on the other. Yet I could not consent to her repeated request, to *marry immediately*. I told her before this could be done it would be needful: 1. To satisfy J. Bennet; 2. To procure my brother's consent; and 3. To send an account of the reasons on which I proceeded to every helper and every Society in England, at the same time desiring their prayers. She said she should not be willing to stay above a year. I replied, "Perhaps less time will suffice."

XIX. While we were at Berwick, I wrote down a short account of the more remarkable passages of her life. Oh! how has God fed thee with the bread of adversity and with water of affliction! This endeared her to me more than before, and at the same time strongly inclined me to believe, that this severe discipline was designed to prepare her for a comforter of many a mother in Israel.

XX. That account is as follows:—

1. I was born on January 18, 1715-16, in Newcastle-upon-Tyne. My parents feared God, but were much distracted with worldly cares and business. My father spoke to me early of the things of God, which began to make an impression upon me when I was scarcely four years old, so that I was soon taken notice of for uncommon seriousness. This was the more observed because my brothers and sisters were little concerned about religion. When I was about four years old, I dreamt I saw God sitting upon His Throne, coming down to judge the world. I was much terrified, till I thought He smiled upon me, on which my fears vanished away. From that time the thoughts of death and judgment were often strong upon my mind, which made me earnest to serve God, and careful to avoid whatever I believed to be displeasing to Him.

2. About six, I began to love going to church. I likewise loved

reading the Bible, and frequently read six or seven chapters together when I read or heard of the sufferings of Christ. I often was deeply affected, though I considered him only as a good man who had suffered wrongfully. In reading the Epistles of St. Paul, I many times stopped and said, "I don't understand this; what does it mean?" But there was none to inform me, so that I was obliged to rest contented.

3. When I was about seven years old, as I was one day in St. Andrew's Church, I felt my soul overpowered with the love of God. And I loved all mankind. All my affections seemed changed. I wanted to be there always. These impressions remained upon my mind for a long time, and indeed were never wholly effaced. But the love of God revived in me from time to time, though I knew nothing of the truth as it is in Jesus.

4. In the meanwhile, I found a continual desire of doing good to all, especially to the poor. From this principle I gave away whatever money was given me, and anything else which I could spare; and indeed more, at some times than I ought to have done, when I took bread or meat, even without the knowledge of my mother, to feed one or two of our poor neighbours, who I knew were ready to perish.

5. I believe I might have been between eight and nine years old when I was sent to the Dancing-school. The company here wore away, by swift degrees, whatever God had wrought in my soul. My love and desire of heavenly things cooled and abated more and more; and I began to love dress, company, and diversions (so-called) of every kind. Yet for some years I retained my love of going to church, till about fourteen or fifteen this also gave place, and I used to spend a considerable part of the Lord's day in walking in the fields.

6. When I was about sixteen, I fell into an acquaintance with a young man, whose affections were soon fixed upon me. By this means I grew still cooler and cooler to the things of God. I conversed with him about two years; at the end of which he much pressed me to marriage. But to this I was utterly averse, so that by being importuned by him on the one hand, and by my father on the other, I determined to escape from both and go to my sister in London.

7. I came to London in the beginning of the summer, 1734. After staying a month with my sister, I went into a service, where I was used more like a child than a servant. Here I went frequently to church, but never to the sacrament, thinking I was not worthy. But indeed, I did not think much about it, being swallowed up in worldly pleasures and diversions, and having rarely any serious thoughts concerning the world to come.

8. On the 13th of May, 1736, I was married to Mr. Murray. In three or four days he went to sea, and stayed about ten or eleven months. Soon after he was gone, I went down to my father's, seeking rest, but finding none. My husband was always before my eyes, and engrossed all my thoughts. My continual fretting was the occasion of my miscarrying. Upon his return to London, I immediately went up to him, where I was with him four months, before he went to sea again: utterly thoughtless of God; as having given my heart to the creature rather than the Creator.

9. He left me with child again; but returned some weeks before I was brought to bed. In my labour I found myself afraid to die, and yet had a trust in God. But when I recovered, my husband again had my heart, and banished all other thoughts. The next year he sent for me down to Portsmouth, where we lodged at a gentlewoman's house who went constantly to church and sacrament, and had prayers in her house thrice a-day. This put me upon serious reflections on my past and present life, and upon earnest prayer, that God would enable me to serve him, and supply in me whatever he saw was wanting.

10. The desires and resolution which were now wrought in my soul, never wholly died away. As I was returning, some weeks after, to London, I saw large numbers of people flocking together upon Kennington Common. I asked what was the matter; and was answered, a gentleman, one Mr. Whitefield, was going to preach there. I had a great desire to hear him; but my husband being unwilling, I would not disoblige him. However, that desire never left me, though I could give little reason for it.

11. In a month my husband went to sea, and a fortnight after, my child died. As I looked at her laid out upon the table, the thoughts of death seized strongly upon me. This was followed by a strange lowness of spirits. Every thing looked dark and gloomy. I could take pleasure in nothing; nor could any company divert me. My sister strove to divert me as much as she could; but it was all in vain. At last I told her, "I think it is my soul;" at which she broke out in amazement: "Nay, if your soul is not safe, who have lived so harmless, what will become of me?" But notwithstanding all she could say or do, my heaviness increased more and more.

12. While I was in this state, a young woman sent to me one day, to ask, if I would go with her to "hear Mr. Whitefield preach." I gladly consented, and went with her to Blackheath. Several persons were sitting on the Mount, and singing. My heart was melted down as soon as I heard them, and I felt a sweetness I had never felt before. I looked up and wondered where I was. When Mr. W. came, I thought there was something in his look, which I

had never seen. He preached on John iii. 8; I listened, and liked all I heard: but I understood it not. However, I found my heart wholly drawn towards God, and I began to seek Him with all my strength.

13. I went to hear him again on the three following days; on the last of which he preached his farewell sermon. When he was gone away, in order to embark for Georgia, I was utterly disconsolate again. I wept much in secret; I walked up and down; but could find no comfort. I spent much time in the church-yard, reading the inscriptions on the tomb-stones, and then standing and crying over my child's grave. My sister laboured more than ever to divert me, fearing I should lose my senses.

14. The next Saturday the young woman sent to me again, to tell me that Mr. Wesley was come, and was to preach in the fields the next morning. I slept little that night. I rose at three, and about four set out, though I knew not where Moorfields was. I overtook a woman going thither, who showed me the way. When Mr. W. stood up, and looked round on the congregation, I fixed my eyes upon him, and felt an inexpressible conviction, that he was sent of God. And when he spoke these words, "Except a man be born again, he cannot see the kingdom of God," they went through me like a dart, and I cried out, "Alas! What shall I do? How shall I be born again?" After the sermon, a young woman (Maria Price) seeing me all in tears, asked, "What is the matter with you?" I said "I don't know." She said, "I will tell you; the hammer of God's love is breaking your heart; only follow on to know the Lord." She spoke many other sweet words. I went home a mere sinner, now knowing what I wanted,—an atonement for my sins.

15. My understanding was now opened, so that I comprehended all I heard, as much as if I had studied it several years; and from this time I omitted no opportunity of attending the preaching in every place. After I had done this for above two months, as I was one evening walking home, it came strongly into my mind, "Beware of false prophets; How do you know but these are the men?" I came home in great trouble, cried earnestly to God, to show me the right way; and then gave myself up to search the scriptures. In doing which, I was so fully satisfied the doctrine was of God, that I could no longer entertain a moment's doubt concerning it.

16. My convictions continually increased, till the night Mr. W. preached his last sermon at Fetter-lane, before his return to Bristol. I heard it; but my heart was as hard as a stone, so that I was quite amazed at myself. As I stepped off the bench, in order to go home, suddenly I was struck down and fell to the ground. I felt as if my heart was bound round as with an iron girdle. . . .

17. The next afternoon, just as Mr. W. began his sermon at Pankridge,[1] I was taken in the same manner. I felt the wrath of God abiding on me. I could now neither eat, nor drink, nor sleep, nor do any kind of business. I mourned day and night, till one advised me to read the third chapter of Jeremiah. While I was reading, I found a hope springing up, that God would have mercy upon me, which never ceased from that hour, though meanwhile I was sensible as ever of my lost estate.

18. Mr. W. went out of town on Monday. On the Monday following, about noon, I was sitting in my own house with Maria Price, reading the 5th Chapter of the Romans, when in a moment all things became new. I seemed to have new eyes, and a new understanding. I saw all I read in a new light. My burthen dropped off; my soul was in peace. My tears were all gone, and I said to her, "Now I know God is my God, and He has forgiven my sins." She replied, "Then be sure you hold fast your confidence." It was not long before I found her caution needful, it being strongly suggested, "how could it be that God should forgive such a sinner?" This threw me into an agony of prayer; in which I had not continued long, before I cried, "Now I know God is *my God;* I know for Christ's sake He has forgiven me; I care not if all the devils in hell and all the men upon earth were to deny it."

19. I could not conceal what God had done. I went and told my sister, but she desired I would keep my madness to myself, and not make her mad too. Yet I could not refrain from declaring the goodness of God, wherever I came, whether they would hear or forbear. I could even have gone into the streets, to call sinners to repentance, and proclaim the Saviour of sinners. I had an insatiable thirst for the salvation of all men; which constrained me to stop any loose women I met; and even to seek them at their houses, and beseech them to turn to God.

20. One day, Mrs. Harvey desired me to go with her, and see a poor man that was near death. I asked him, "are you afraid to die?" He replied, "O yes! for I am a vile sinner; I have committed all manner of sins; I am lost; I am going to hell." I said, "But Christ died for you, and has borne all your sins." He answered, "What, Christ die for *me!*" After speaking a few words, I went to prayer; and he broke out, "He did, he did! I feel he did!" and died singing praises to God.

21. For four months I went on rejoicing, and praising God, and finding it my meat and drink to do His will, though I had now and then some doubts; but they continued not, nor interrupted my peace or love. I was then one day making my bed, with my heart

[1] PANKRIDGE, now called PANCRAS, probably near the spot in Tottenham Court Road, where Whitefield's chapel now stands.

full of prayer, when the power of God fell upon me, and I cried out "My Father, my Father!" and dropped down to the ground. I saw (but in a manner no tongue can express) God the Father looking upon me through His Son, as if I had never committed any sin. I saw the Son as one with the Father, and yet distinct from Him. My soul went up in an even stream to God. I saw Him indeed gracious and merciful, and was filled with such a reverential love, as it had not entered into my heart to conceive. And this glorious light was always before my eyes for more than a year; so that I walked as on the clouds, and trod both sin and temptation under foot.

22. During this time I was informed my husband was taken by the Spaniards. I calmly replied, "The will of God be done!" I went into my chamber, and was pouring out my soul in prayer, when I saw (as in a vision) my husband pursued by his enemies, but escaping from them. I could have no doubt but it was so; I felt no fear; but left him in the hands of God.

23. When he returned, he sent me down to the ship. Almost as soon as I came on board, I heard several cursing and swearing; which I could not bear. After a time, I heard my husband swear. I told him, "My dear, you must not swear before me." He stared; but said nothing. I added, "I cannot stay here; 'tis like a hell to me." He said, "What is come to you; what! are you got converted?" I replied, "You have need to be converted too." We went home, and after a while, he went to see my brother and sister, who told him, "We are glad to see you; but we are sorry for you on account of your poor mad wife. She goes to hear those Methodists!" He came back to me, and asked if I heard Mr. Whitefield? I answered, "I did, till he went away; now I hear Mr. Wesley." He swore I should hear him no more. I replied, "You are the lord of my body; but Christ is the Lord of my soul. If I were to yield to you in this, I should lose my soul; and my blood would be upon your head." He stamped and raved and swore, "you shall leave them, or me." I answered, "I love you above any one on earth; but I will leave you and all that I have, sooner than I will leave Christ."

24. He went to my brother again, to consult what was to be done, and told me, on his return, "You are utterly distracted, and I am determined to send you to the mad-house in West Gardens. It is for your own sake as well as mine. You have made me unhappy and yourself too." I replied, "I am not unhappy, I never was so happy in my life; I never knew what happiness meant, till I heard Mr. Wesley. I am ready to go not only to prison, but to death; I know in whom I have believed; I am confident He would give me [strength] to confess Him to the flames!" He walked to and fro,

and said, "Can you leave me then?" I said, "Rather than leave Christ." He said, "Then to the mad-house you must go." So he turned and went away.

25. I immediately fell to prayer, and had a confidence given me, that he could not proceed. In a quarter of an hour he came back and said, "I cannot bear to put you in a mad-house, but neither can I bear to see your utter ruin. You have almost ruined yourself already; and if you are resolved to go on thus, I will leave you; I will go as far as ships can sail." I told him, "I cannot help it; I could lay down my life for you; but I cannot destroy my soul. If you are resolved to go, you must go: I give you up to God."

26. Perceiving he could not prevail by this means, he soon after tried another. He gave me good words, offered me whatever I would have, and endeavoured, by all manner of persuasions, to make me keep to my church, and leave these people. But herein also God was my helper. He then stayed at home, on purpose to keep me there. But one afternoon I asked him to let me go out. He said, "What, to the Foundry?" I answered, "Yes." He replied, "No indeed! he never would." Yet, in less than an hour he said, "Go; but you will see what will follow." When I came thither, the people flocked round me, and exhorted me to remain steadfast. And God greatly refreshed me, and exhorted me to remain steadfast. And God greatly refreshed me, so that I went home, full of joy and prayer, and thanksgiving. I found my husband at the door; but God had softened his heart, so that he gave me not one harsh word.

27. Soon after I fell sick, and in a few days kept my bed. He would fain have had a physician; but I would not. I would gladly have conversed with some of the children of God, but this he would not consent to. He asked one day, if I would have him read by me. I said, "With all my heart." He read, till the tears came down his cheeks, and he said, "Send for whom you have a mind." Mrs. Holton came up stairs just then. The very sight of her refreshed me.

28. She left me one of Mr. Whitefield's journals. He came in, took it up, and opened where it is said, "I know God has forgiven me my many and great sins: but I cannot forgive myself." The tears started into his eyes, and he said thus, "If these good men talk so, what must I do? for I am a sinner indeed." I clapt my hands, and began praying earnestly for him. He went on, "I think you are in the right; I fear I have been fighting against God. If it please God to raise you up again, I will never hinder you more."

29. From this time he was more and more convinced of sin; he searched the scriptures much, willingly heard me read and talk, as I was able, of the things of God. He gladly received any that

feared God, listened to them with deep attention, and desired nothing so much, as to know Jesus Christ and Him crucified.

30. I was all this time weak in body; but my soul was full of love, and peace, and power. In the year 1740, the apothecary told my husband, if anything could recover me, it would be my native air. Upon this, he pressed me to go down to Newcastle.

31. Here I received a letter from my sister, informing me that my husband had been taken by the Spaniards; but was now in Yarmouth Road, returning home. This was in November; just then was the great storm. In the midst of which my mother told me, "You must not expect to see your husband any more." I answered, "The will of the Lord be done!" and found my soul in perfect peace. But I continued instant in prayer, and in a few days it was clearly shown me he would return; and I said to my mother one morning, "This day I shall see my husband." About four in the afternoon he knocked at the door. I dropped down, but soon rose again, and praised God.

32. Three days after, my father was taken ill. I was thoroughly convinced he would not recover. He lay sick about eight days. On the eighth day I was above stairs, when the power of God came upon me in an uncommon manner, with those words, "It is finished, it is done." I went down immediately, and found him quietly resigning his spirit into the hands of God.

33. In the beginning of the year 1741, we returned to London. I was brought to bed in May following. My husband followed the home-trade, that he might be with me, till my time was over. A day or two after I was delivered, a neighbour came in, but seemed afraid to speak. I told her, "Don't be afraid; I know what is the matter; my husband is pressed; God's will be done!" She seemed amazed; but it was no burden to me. I knew not then what murmuring meant. I never felt any discontent or anger, nor repining at God or man.

34. In August my husband sailed for Virginia. I went down to him to the ship at Deptford, and stayed with him two or three days. He saw that I was uneasy, and said "My dear, I see you can't bear this place. You shall go home; I will set you forward." As we were walking, he said, "I am a great sinner; commend me to the prayers of your people." I then found great power to speak to his heart; he wept much, till we were forced to part. After going a little way from me, he came back and said he knew not how to leave me. He went on with me awhile; I felt an uncommon weight, and the same was on him likewise. But still I could give him up to God, without one discontented thought.

35. I felt a daily increase of peace and love, till the latter end of May, 1742. About that time I was one night just laid down, when

I felt a weight come upon my feet. I thought the cat had come upon me, and strove to push her off. Presently I felt it rising higher and higher by my side, till it seemed to lie by me the full length of a man. I felt an awe, but no fear, praying continually, and knowing I was in the hands of God. After a few minutes it rolled off, and fell upon the ground. I fell asleep, and dreamed I saw my husband lying in his coffin. I cried and asked, "Will you not speak to me?" He just lifted up his eyes, and shut them again.[1] I awoke in great trouble, and slept again, and dreamed the same dream. When I awoke, I was convinced my husband was dead; but I was so filled with God, that at this time nothing could disturb or interrupt my happiness in Him.

36. The ship did not return (from Virginia) till October following. I had been visiting one that was sick, being full of love, and trampling upon all below, when a messenger told me, "The *Prince Frederick* was in the river." I hastened home, having my soul stayed on God. Presently after, the cook's wife came in, and said, "Mrs. Murray, I have been on board the ship, and I saw your husband well." I said, "No; my husband is not in the ship; but let us take a boat, and go aboard." My sister and I did so. When we came alongside, the wife of one of the sailors cried out, "Mrs. Murray, do not come here; go ashore, pray go ashore." As we were walking up the stairs, she said to my sister, "Mr. Murray is drowned." I turned and said, "I hear what you say." But my soul was in peace; I felt the everlasting arms of God were around me.

37. When I came home I was still in peace; but after a time I took my eye off God, and began to consider how tender a husband he had been, and how he used to look and talk with me. Then Satan gained an advantage over me, and I shrieked out, "What, must I see him no more!" .... As soon as I was able, I wrote to my mother, and told her of my husband's death. In her answer she advised me to come to Newcastle. I asked Mr. Wesley's advice. He told me he was going thither himself, and should be glad to meet me there.

38. I sailed from London at the end of October, and came to Newcastle a few days before Mr. Wesley. John Brydon came frequently to me at my mother's; but it was no temptation to me. God had restored my peace; and I desired nothing but Him. I endeavoured to improve my time, by speaking to every one I could, either at Horsley or the neighbouring villages, as well as by praying with those of the Society. And God was with us of a truth. Many

[1] A remarkable, but not uncommon, presentment of a catastrophe, which was too soon found to be true.

were convinced of sin; James Watson and some others receiving remission of sins.

39. Mr. Downes used till now to read in the Society. I asked him, "Will you not give us a word of exhortation?" He said, "I dare not." I replied, "Let us go to prayer; I will ask of God to open your mouth." I found great enlargement of heart in prayer. In the evening he expounded our Lord's word to the Samaritan woman. And from this time he found no want of words; neither were his words without a blessing.

40. I came back to Newcastle about Christmas, where I had been but a day or two, when I was sent for to Tanfield-Leigh. After the sermon, I prayed with many of the Society, and four received remission of sins. The next day I went to Tanfield, and met most of the Society, and God broke many of our hearts in pieces. During all this time I had settled peace, a full confidence in God, a burning zeal for His glory, a vehement desire to spend and be spent for all men. But I had not that love and comfort in God, that clear intercourse with Him, neither that power to behold Him with open face which I had so long enjoyed.

41. I was soon after appointed leader of several classes at Newcastle, till Mr. Wesley advised me to go to London, and bring down what I thought the best of my goods, that I might live altogether at his house. Accordingly, I had agreed on my passage, and was going down to Shields, to take ship, when a note was delivered to me from Mr. W., desiring I would stay at London when I was there. I was in amaze; I went up straight to Mr. W., and asked, what was the matter. He immediately took me with him to S. Jackson's, who accused me of speaking many things against her before John Brydon and several others. Mr. W. had them all face to face, and they wholly acquitted me of the charge. However, I retired to my mother's, and came no more to Mr. Wesley's, though I constantly attended both morning and evening preaching.

42. I was now more and more acquainted with John Brydon, and though there never was any engagement between us, yet it was commonly supposed, we were on the point to marry. Of this Mr. W. spoke to me one morning, and advised me to go into the country, without letting him know where I went. According, I rode straight away to Tanfield, and visited as many as I could all around; and we seldom met or parted without a blessing, so that the flame was kindled in every place.

43. In the beginning of April, 1743, Mr. W. returned to London; I came thither soon after, and was seized with a fever. I was in great heaviness of soul, and cried to God, "Only let me know that I shall be saved at the last; I give up all things else into Thy hands." Immediately the answer came, "Thou shalt be saved

at the last; but it shall be as by fire." And in all doubts and fears which I have felt since that time that word has been as an anchor to my soul: *Thou shalt be saved at the last.*

44. In Autumn 1743, I returned to Newcastle. I now gave myself up altogether to the service of the church. Part of the week I spent with my classes and the sick; the other part I was in the country. I went to Tanfield first. Many of us met in the evening, and among the rest a remarkably wild young man, with whom I had talked before,—a famous gamester,—who said he desired to break it off; but it was impossible. I took the hymn-book; but had scarcely given out one line, when an awe from God fell upon us all; so that I was constrained to say, "Be still, and know that God is in the midst of us." I then prayed. As soon as I named the young man, a cry ran through the whole assembly. Ann Laws and three or four others received a sense of the pardoning love of God; and the young man cried out, "I will game no more; I will serve God, I will serve God."

45. I stayed a year in Mr. W.'s family, dividing my time between the town and country. All this time I enjoyed a settled peace, but not such love and joy as in time past. Indeed, I found less of these, from the very time when I began to labour for the souls of others, having usually a deep sense of my wants and ignorance—and emptiness; then especially, when God was pleased to work among the people in so surprising a manner, I then felt myself stripped (as it were) of all things; only I knew that God loved me.

46. Mr. W. now coming to Newcastle, I desired to speak with him. I told him I could not stay in his family any longer, as being utterly unable to please S. Jackson in anything. He desired to hear us face to face; Mr. Meyrick and West all were present. After we had had a full hearing, he consented I should go. So I had no further concern in the family.

47. While I was at Newcastle, John Brydon married, and soon grew quite light and careless. This shocked me exceedingly. I was afraid his blood would be upon my head, because I did not marry him. The more I reasoned, the more confused I was, till I had lost sight of God. Yet I could not be unemployed a moment, but was continually praying with and exhorting others. One day as I was walking over the Croft to meet my class, I felt a cloud fall in a moment, as it were on my body as well as soul. A horrible darkness overwhelmed me, and I thought, "I am taking all this pains for God and for my soul;—what, if I have no soul! what, if there be no God?" Immediately I looked up and said, "If I had no soul, how could I live and move? If there be no God, who spread out the heavens like a curtain? Who laid the foundations of the earth?" I then cried aloud, "If thou be a God, save me!"

But there was no answer. When I came to the stile, I was violently tempted to throw myself down and dash my brains out. I hastened on, till I came into the passage leading to the Minor Chair, where an unspeakable horror fell upon me.

48. When I came home, I locked myself up in my room at P. Gibson's. I prayed with my lips (which I did almost continually), but I felt it not; my heart was quite frozen; it was hard as the nether mill-stone. I read the Bible; but the promises were nothing to me; I could claim none of them. On the contrary, I took all the threatenings to myself, all was lamentation, and mourning, and woe. I saw nothing but hell before my eyes; a had no hope of escaping; yet I abhorred sin; I could not bear to speak or hear an idle word, or to see anything light or trifling.

49. I had long been in a gloomy and despairing state of mind when one morning Mr. Maxfield was mentioning a Predestinarian, who died in deep despair. It immediately struck me, "So shall I." She said God had created her to damn her, and so he did me. He determinded to damn me, and so has given me up; and he gave me that grace and love which I once had, only to increase my damnation. And these thoughts I could never entirely shake off; but they pursued me day and night.

50. I was likewise grievously tormented with that scripture, Heb. vi. 4, I knew I had tasted the good word and the powers of the world to come; and therefore believed, that seeing I was thus fallen away, it was impossible to renew me again to repentance; and that there remained nothing but a fearful looking-for of fiery indignation.

51. Indeed, I mourned and wept for God continually: but this gave me no manner of comfort; it being suggested, "Yes, so Esau mourned and wept, but he found no place for repentance; neither could he obtain the blessing he had cast away, though he sought it carefully with tears."

52. Many times such a slavish fear fell upon me, that I thought I was just dropping into hell. I felt myself utterly banished from God. I remembered the days of old, when I saw the smiling face of God; but now I could not see Him but as an angry Judge. I had no spark of hope left, and saw nothing before me but the blackness of darkness for ever. I wished I had never been born; I wished I had no soul; I wished I had been a beast or creeping thing. Often I was so desperate, as not to have a desire of salvation, nor to care whether I was saved or damned. Sometimes I even wished to be in hell, that I might know the worst, and frequently, in the midst of all this, my body was so affected, that the bed shook under me, and I felt as if one had begun at the crown of my head and flayed off my skin, yea, my flesh and all, to the very soles of my feet.

53. I was one morning at breakfast at Mr. Huntley's, when I was seized in this manner. Hannah Jones saw my colour change, and asked "What is the matter?" I said, "I am not well." I rose up and hastened away to S. Proctor's, where my band was waiting for me. I threw myself on the bed, and roared aloud for the disquietness of my soul. They were all frightened. I cried out, "Pray, pray, can none of you pray for me?" After she had spent some time, she broke off and said, "I can pray no more; I think your burden is come upon me." Ann Gooddall then burst into prayer. The power of God came down, and struck that word to my heart: "This is the cup of which the Son of God drank; wilt thou not drink of His cup?" I cried, "Lord, I will; if it be His cup, I will drink of it; only give me Thy strength." A little ray of hope then darted into my soul.

54. But this lasted not long; in a little time I was again covered with thick darkness. The same week some of my band came to see me at my mother's. While we were sitting at tea, I was seized, as before, with the same agony both of body and soul. I set down my cup, and desired we might pray. My mouth was filled with words, and all around me were melted into tears. But my heart was neither broken nor heated; I remained as dead and dry as ever, though I dared tell none how I was, for fear of turning the weak or lame out of the way.

55. I often said, "Oh that I had wings like a dove, that I might fly away, and be at rest." That I might escape from all the busy ways of men and be alone, where no eye might see me! I wandered about in fields and solitary places, and would gladly have been always there; but I did not dare to forsake those who were committed to my charge, nor to stay away either from the morning or evening preaching. I likewise visited the sick, though I was myself shrunk almost into a skeleton; so that many used to ask me, "Why I came out?" and told me I was fitter in bed than anywhere else.

56. About this time I began to doubt whether Christ was God; and to reason how He could be one with the Father. I reasoned till I had no light concerning Him left, no more than if I had never believed! Then I thought how unmerciful God was, and hard to be entreated! How cruelly He dealt with me!—with a thousand other blasphemous imaginations. These arrows stuck faster and faster into my soul, and the poison of them drank up my spirits. Yet I kept all to myself, and was continually exhorting others to believe in the name of the Son of God.

57. Nevertheless, God gave me sometimes refreshing sleep, though at other times my sleep departed from me. I likewise often mingled my meat with tears, and often forgot to eat my bread. Often I purposely abstained from food, because of the saying of our

Lord, "This kind goeth not forth but by prayer and fasting;" and that for several days together. This I the more willingly did, because I found it impaired my bodily strength; for I desired death rather than life; I loathed the thought of my living long. Another reason of my long and continued fasts was that I might destroy whatever it was, whereby I had been a snare to men, that I might never hurt any man more.

58. It was now the time of Lent, 1744, when I was much tempted "*Not to eat any more.*" Under this persuasion I neither ate nor drank for several days; nor had any desire of meat or drink. I felt no pain, only I grew weaker and weaker; but this was no concern to me. I was willing to leap into a fiery furnace, or to have my body cut into a thousand pieces, so my soul might be saved at the last; but immediately after receiving the sacrament on Easter-day the snare was broken; I prayed, as I could, that God would show me His will; and for a time I had a little comfort.

59. Yet I soon grew darker again, having no sight of God, no peace, no hope. However, I resolved to bring as many others to God as I could, and to live and die in His work, whatever became of me after death. With this view I went one day to visit a person in Sandgate, but it was vehemently, "why what can you say to him? you know not God; you know not if there be any Christ." I came in and asked, "William, is the Son of man risen upon your soul?" He said, "Not yet, but I believe He will soon?" I prayed with him. His soul was filled with peace; and two or three days after he quietly gave up his spirit to God.

60. The same night I was at home, when the power of darkness fell upon me, and overwhelmed both my body and soul. My spirit was wounded within me. My body felt as if it was all empty and burnt up, so that I could compare it to nothing but a piece of wood which had been burnt to a coal. The next day I was in racking pain, and the next evening I was in the same condition. I continued thus till I fell asleep; but with dreams and terrified with visions; and when the morning came, the light was as the shadow of death; and I awoke—

"to all the woes I left behind."

61. About Christmas, 1744, Mr. Briggs came down from London. As soon as I saw him in the desk, it was as it were whispered to me, "There is a messenger of God to thee for good." In the afternoon John Nelson told us, "One of our brethren was come from London who would meet any of the bands that desired it." I desired he would meet mine. He did so in the morning, and a few days after (on my return from Horsley) we had much conversation together. I opened my whole heart to him, not willingly

keeping back anything. The more we conversed the more my mind was eased. My doubt concerning the sins of John Brydon being imputed to me, was soon removed, and the horrible dread was taken away.

62. Anno 1745. From this time I began to hope against hope; but I now fell into sufferings of another kind. I was seized with an inexpressible sense of the judgments of God hanging over the nation. Everything I saw or heard, the very blowing of the wind, the waving of the trees, the murmuring of the water, seemed to bespeak the wrath of God, and the heavy punishment He was about to bring upon a people laden with iniquities. And as I was one morning alone, a dread fell upon me, as if we were all about to be destroyed. I thought the Papists were just going to swallow us up. I cried vehemently, "Lord, I am not fit to die, neither can I resist unto blood; but give me Thy strength, and I will suffer all things."

63. I continued groaning under these apprehensions, till Mr. C. W. came to Newcastle. Under an exhortation he gave one night to the bands, I received power to hope; and I went home, rejoicing in hope. But Satan soon thrust sore at me again, suggesting, "What pride and presumption it was, for such a sinner as I to hope for mercy." I cried out, "Well, Satan, if the Son of God will not save me, I am content to perish; and if my perishing will glorify God, I am content to go to hell." And I found a willingness in my inmost soul to suffer anything which might glorify Him; yea, if it were for the glory of God to remain in hell to all eternity.

64. Mr. W. took me with him to several places in the country; and I found a continual increase of hope; and I never wanted power from God to pray with and labour among the people. After he went away, I was meeting a band, when on a sudden I was struck with sharp pain from the crown of the head to the sole of the foot. Immediately I was in a burning fever; at the same time I felt a full and clear sense of the pardoning love of God, and I knew my soul was set at liberty, and that Satan was departed from me. I saw all I had suffered had been for good. I saw God had been with me walking on the waters, and that when I went through the fires, he had covered my head, that I might not be consumed. I was carried home and kept my bed for twelve or fourteen days. But pain was now nothing; I knew God, I rejoiced in God my Saviour. I glorified Him in the fires; I was willing not only to die, but, if it were his will, to live and suffer all my days.

65. As soon as I was able to sit a horse, I went to Sheep-Hill, where I recovered my strength in a few days, to the surprise of all that saw me. At my return to Newcastle I gladly resumed my work of visiting the sick and attending the classes and bands. My

labour was now again my delight, my soul was stayed upon God continually. I had no doubt of His love, I had no fear of His wrath, and no desire but to do and suffer His will. I was more than ever before, crucified unto the world, and the world crucified unto me. I was free from everything here below, and wholly athirst for God, the living God.

66. In August the Rebellion broke out, which was no surprise to me. Mr. W. came to Newcastle in September, and in November set out for London. Soon after, in pursuance of his advice, I went to live at Sheep-Hill. Three days in each week I was at home; the rest I usually spent in the Societies. In December Mr. W. wrote, that I should go and take charge of the house at Newcastle. I was much averse to this at first; but was convinced in a moment that God had called me to it. So, on Christmas-eve I left Sheep-Hill and came into the house on Christmas-day.

67. I found Mr. Sheppard ill in the house; but in a few weeks he recovered; Mr. Houghton then fell sick of a fever. For three weeks I was never undressed; but I wanted neither rest nor sleep; at last I felt no want till he recovered his health, and then I was taken with the fainting fits which have never left me since.

69. Mr. Westall was with us in summer, and in autumn was taken ill of a fever. When he begun to recover I fell down. I kept my bed about three weeks: but my soul was happy in God. I told S. Proctor, "God has laid me upon this bed, that I may have time for prayer." And my heart and mouth were filled with prayer continually; for a great part of this time it was impressed on my mind with an unspeakable force, "That in three years I should see a great change;" but of what kind it was to be I knew not.

70. When I began to recover, Mr. Westall and I went up together one night to the leads. As we were sitting, he told me how the devil had tormented him at Bristol; and immediately he cried, "He is not far from us now." I said, "I feel him near; but God is nearer than he is." We came down and began to sing: but we knew not how to leave off. We continued singing and praying one after another; and did not rise till it was past twelve o'clock. The same spirit of prayer was upon us the next day (Thursday), and so every day till the following Thursday, so that we could scarcely do anything but pray day and night, and continued therein twice, till past two in the morning. On the second Thursday the bands met. While Mr. Westall paused, I was constrained to break out into loud prayer. A cry went forth, many wept; many praised God; all but four were filled with consolation. Mr. Westall and I had begun fasting the day before. We tasted nothing till the next day, Friday evening; and we found no inconveniency to our bodies; but our souls were fed as with marrow and fatness. Eliza

Boomer was not at the bands, being confined in her own house; but she did not thereby lose her share of the blessing. She saw (as she afterwards said) the glory of the Lord at that very hour resting upon the house, and was filled in an unusual manner with peace and joy in the Holy Ghost.

71. On Saturday morning Jane Tinkler and Mary Armstrong came up after the preaching. J. Tinkler had known the peace of God; but was now a sinner stripped of all. S. Armstrong had never known the peace of God, but was earnestly mourning after it. I cried to God, and was constrained to say, "Now, J. Tinkler, your soul is set at liberty." She instantly answered, "It is, it is; I taste the powers of the world to come." We then prayed for M. Armstrong. The answer soon came, and she also was set at liberty. We then prayed for my mother, for Mrs. Armstrong and her husband, that they might know in whom they had believed. Mrs. A. did not rest from that hour, till she knew her sins were blotted out. Mrs. A. soon died in peace; and about the same time my mother rejoiced in God her Saviour. After prayer we went to breakfast. In the midst of breakfast I cried out, "I see Mr. C. Wesley; he is not far off;" and a few minutes after Mr. W. and Mr. Perrt came to the gate.

72. When he went away in January, 1747, he asked me to go a day's journey with him. I said to S. Proctor, "I will put a gown and some linen, for I believe I shall see John Nelson's house before I see you again." We rode to Ferry-Hill; Mr. W. then cast lots which of us, B. Swindels or I, should go forwards. The lot fell upon me. I went into Lincolnshire and Yorkshire, met the women of the Societies, and settled the band. I found it was good for me to be among them, and God gave us many blessings together.

73. In February I returned to Newcastle. Mr. Wesley soon after came, and spent part of Lent there. After we went, B. Hopper carried me to Annandale. Mr. Richards went with us, and stayed three days. The night after we went back, the Society met. Several were broken to pieces and several healed. We met every night after, and had the same blessing. In the day-time, partly the people came to me, partly I went to them. By this means I spoke with all the Society (as well as many others), and divided the believers into bands. I had at first designed to stay only a week, but the work of God so mightily prevailed, and the poor people were so importunate with me, that I could not break away till I had spent a month among them. My employment then was as usual; part of the week in town, the other part in the country Societies.

74. This summer, 1747, B. Wheatley, Dunstar, and Webster, were all ill in the house together. Mr. Wheatley would suffer none but me to come near him, which confined me more than I desired, and wore my body down till I was exceedingly weak. About

Midsummer I went up to London. When I returned, some of our sisters began to be offended, and to make many objections to me. I did all I could to remove them. I called frequently upon them, and spoke as lovingly and plainly as I could. But it did not avail. They were still equally displeased, and endeavoured to spread the same spirit among others. But I did not as yet perceive any resentment towards them, only I was grieved, because they hurt their own souls.

75. The next Lent, 1748, Mr. Wesley spent wholly in the North. He took me with him through all the country Societies. At this our sisters were much offended, and others soon caught the infection. This put me upon reasoning that profited nothing. Till now I had received all things, honour or dishonour, the good-will or ill-will of any, as from the hand of God, but now I began to think, "How hard this is! To use me thus! After I have slaved for them so many years! Well, I will get out of it all; I will leave them to themselves; I will suffer this no longer." By this means I was fretted and weakened, and was brought to think of what I had before cast from me.

76. When Mr Wesley came down in the latter end of the year, and took me with him again into the country, the offence increased, and I looked at it more and more. It was now that Mr. Wesley being ill, I was obliged to be with him much both day and night, and he spoke to me more freely than before; but I could not believe even what I heard, it seemed too strange to be true; and all the time I was with him in his return through Yorkshire and Derbyshire I understood him not, not even when he said, "In Spring you shall go with me to Ireland. We must part for a while, but if we meet again, I trust we shall part no more."

77. The day after Mr. Wesley went away, Mr. B. proposed marriage to me. A day or two after I consented, without asking Mr. W.'s advice. I then returned to Newcastle. After resting a week there, I visited all the Societies in the south, settled the bands, and endeavoured to remove offences, and regulate all things as well as I could. I then went the north round, and stayed a week at Berwick. I was very ill when I came there. Two days I stayed within, and many came to me. The third night I was under much concern, and earnestly besought God to show me to what end He had brought me to that place. It was then impressed upon my mind to meet the class of children, which accordingly I did the next morning. As soon as I began to sing, the power of God was upon us, and increased more and more. We continued together till past twelve o'clock, during which time God revealed His pardoning love to — Archbold, and four or five of the children, some of whom walk in the light to this day.

[Thus far her Account.]

XXI. We stayed here from Saturday to Thursday, and the more I knew her the more I loved her. She frequently told me, "In time past I could have married another if you would have given me away, but now it is impossible we should part; God has united us for ever." Abundance of conversation to the same effect we had on our return to Newcastle, where on Sunday, the 17th, we continued conversing together till late at night, and she gave me all the assurances which words could give, of the most intense and inviolable affection. The same she renewed every day, yea, every hour when we were alone, unless we were employed in prayer, which indeed took up a considerable part of the time we were together.

XXII. On Monday and Tuesday, that I might be able to form a clearer judgment of her real character, I talked at large with all those who were disgusted at her, and inquired into their reasons for it. I found none of them new except sister Lyddell's, "That she had the impudence to ride into the town with Mr. Wesley" (which was accidentally true, Mr. P. and James Kirkshaw having rode away from us). Mr. Williams accused [her] "of not lending his wife her saddle" (being just going to take horse herself). Mrs. Williams, of buying a Holland shift (which was not true). Nancy and Peggy Watson, of buying a Joseph before she wanted it; Ann Matteson, of being proud and insolent; and Betty Graham, of buying an apron worth ten shillings (which, indeed, was not bought at all). I plainly perceived jealousy and envy were the real grounds of most of these objections and accusations, and idle senseless prejudice of the rest; offence taken, but not given; so that, after all, her character appeared untouched, and for anything they could prove, she had done all things well.

XXIII. Wed. 20. Christopher Hooper met us at Horseley, and guided us to Hinely-Hill. Understanding he knew John Bennet's design, I told him the whole affair. He was much moved, and undertook to go himself to John Bennet, and try if he could not satisfy him. To this end, he set out on Friday, intending to go on slowly, so as to be at Chinley about Tuesday.

XXIV. At her request we renewed the contract made in Dublin. B. Hopper, observing her pause and tremble before she spoke the words, asked, "Sister M., have you any scruple upon your mind? if you have the least scruple I beg you would stop. Pray do." She cheerfully replied, "I have none at all;" and then spoke the words immediately. An hour after I took horse for Whitehaven, leaving her to examine and settle the women-bands in Allandale. She stood looking after me till I was up the hill. I had not one uneasy thought, believing God would give us to meet again at the time when He saw good.

XXV. Yet from the time I came to Whitehaven there was something hanging on my mind which I knew not how to explain, and the first night I lay there I dreamed John Bennet came to me. I asked him, "Where is Sister Murray?" He replied, "At Chinley." I waked in a moment, and (for that time) slept no more. I wrote to her on Saturday, and was amazed at myself when I began my letter with these lines:—"There is I know not what of sad presage, that tells me we shall never meet again." But I endeavoured to cast it off, being persuaded that now neither life nor death would part us.

XXVI. On Sunday in the afternoon I was calmly waiting upon God, when those words in the first Lesson came as a sword to my heart, *Son of man, behold! I take from thee the desire of thine eyes with a stroke.* Immediately a shivering ran through me, and in a minute I was in a fever. But when I came home, seeing a vast congregation in the market-place, I could not send them empty away; and while I was speaking to them, God remembered me and strengthened me, both in soul and body.

XXVII. As soon as I had finished my letter to John Bennet on the 7th instant, I sent a copy of it to my brother at Bristol. The thought of my marrying at all, but especially of my marrying a servant and one so low-born, appeared above measure shocking to him. Thence he inferred it would appear so to all mankind, and consequently, that it would break up all our Societies, and put a stop to the whole work of God.

XXVIII. Full of this, instead of writing to me (who would have met him anywhere at the first summons) he hurried down from Bristol to Leeds. There he met with Robert Swindells and William Shent, who informed him (which he had heard slightly mentioned before) that Grace Murray was engaged to J. Bennet. This was adding oil to the flame. So he posted to Newcastle, taking with him William Shent, not many degrees cooler than himself.

XXIX. Here he met with Jane Keith, a woman of strong sense and exquisite subtilty. She had long been prejudiced against G. Murray, which had broken out more than once. She gave him just such an account as he wished to hear, and at his request set it down in writing. The sum of it was,—1st. That Mr. Wesley was in love with Grace Murray beyond all sense and reason; 2nd. That he had shown this in the most public manner, and had avowed it to all the Society; and 3rd. That all the town was in an uproar, and all the Societies ready to fly in pieces.

XXX. My brother, believing all this, flew on for Whitehaven, concluding G. Murray and I were there together He reached it (with W. Shent) on Monday. I was not at all surprised when I saw him. He urged, "All our Preachers would leave us, all our Societies disperse, if I married so mean a woman." He then

observed, she was engaged to J. Bennet. As I knew she was pre-engaged to me, as I regarded not her birth, but her qualifications, and as I believed those consequences might be prevented, I could see no valid objection yet. However, I did not insist on my own judgment, but desired the whole might be preferred to Mr. Pert, which he readily consented to.

XXXI. As soon as I was alone, I began to consider with myself, Whether I was *in my senses* or no? Whether love *had put out my eyes* (as my brother affirmed) or I had the use of them still? I weighed the steps I had taken yet again, and the grounds on which I had proceeded. A short account of these I wrote down simply in the following terms:—

1. From the time I was six or seven years old, if any one spoke to me concerning marrying, I used to say I thought I never should, "Because I should never find such a woman as my father had."

2. When I was about seventeen (and so till I was six or seven and twenty) I had no thought of marrying, because I could not keep a wife.

3. I was then persuaded "It was unlawful for a Priest to marry," grounding that persuasion on the (supposed) sense of the Primitive Church.

4. Not long after, by reading some of the mystic writers, I was brought to think marriage was the less perfect state, and that there was some degree (at least) of taint upon the mind, necessarily attending the marriage-bed.

5. At the same time I viewed in a strong light St. Paul's words to the Corinthians, and judged it impossible for a married man to be so without carefulness, or to attend upon the Lord with so little distraction as a single man might do.

6. Likewise, being desirous to lay out all I could in feeding the hungry and clothing the naked, I could not think of marrying, because it would bring such expense, as would swallow up all I now gave away.

7. But my grand objection for these twelve years past has been, "A dispensation of the Gospel has been committed unto me, and I will do nothing which directly or indirectly tends to hinder my preaching the Gospel."

8. My first objection was easily removed by my finding some, though very few women, whom I could not but allow to be equal to my mother both in knowledge and piety.

9. My second—that I could not keep a wife—held only till I found reason to believe there were persons in the world who were both able and willing to keep *me*.

10. My third vanished away when I read with my own eyes Bishop Beveridge's *Codex Conciliorum*. I then found the very

council of Nice had determined just the contrary to what I had supposed.

11. St. Paul slowly and gradually awakened me out of my mystic dream, and convinced me "the bed is undefiled," and no necessary hinderance to the highest perfection, though I did not yet shake off the weight till our last conference in London.

12. I was next, though very unwillingly, convinced that there might be such a case as Dr. Koker's, who often declared he was never so free from care, never served God with so little distraction, as since his marriage with one who was both able and willing to bear that care for him.

13. The two other objections weighed with me still, increase of expense and hindering the Gospel; but with regard to the former I now clearly perceived that my marriage would bring little expense if I married one whom I maintain now, who would afterwards desire nothing more than she had before, and would cheerfully consent that our children (if any) should be wholly brought up at Kingswood.

14. As to the latter, I have the strongest assurance which the nature of the thing will allow, that the person proposed would not hinder, but exceedingly further me in the work of the Gospel; for, from a close observation of several years (three of which she spent under my own roof), I am persuaded she is in every capacity a help-meet for me.

15. First, as a housekeeper, she has every qualification I desire. She understands all I want to have done. She is remarkably neat in person, in clothes, in all things. She is nicely frugal, yet not sordid. She has much common sense; contrives everything for the best; makes everything go as far as it can go; foresees what is wanting and provides it in time; does all things quickly and yet without hurry; she is a good workwoman, able to do the finest, ready to do the coarsest work; observes my rules when I am absent as well as when I am present; and takes care that those about her observe them, yet seldom disobliges any of them.

16. As a nurse (which my poor shattered, enfeebled carcass now frequently stands in need of), she is careful to the last degree, indefatigably patient, and inexpressibly tender. She is quick, cleanly, skilful, and understands my constitution better than most physicians.

17. As a companion, she has good sense, and some knowledge both of men and books. She is of an engaging behaviour, and of a mild, sprightly, cheerful, and yet serious temper.

18. As a friend, she has been long tried and found faithful. She watches over me both in body and soul, understanding all my weaknesses, sympathizing with me, and helpful to me in all; never

ashamed, never afraid; having a continual presence of mind in all difficulties and dangers; in all, enabled to cover my head and strengthen my hands in God.

19. Lastly, as a fellow-labourer in the Gospel of Christ (the light wherein my wife is to be chiefly considered), she had gifts, and in a measure which I never found in any other, both grace, and fruit. With regard to the first, she is crucified unto the world, desiring nothing but God, dead to the desire of the flesh, the desire of the eye, the pride of life; exemplarily chaste, modest, temperate, yet without any affectation. She is teachable and reprovable, gentle and long-suffering, eminently compassionate, weeping with those that weep, bearing both my burdens, those of the preacher and those of the people, zealous of good works, longing to spend and be spent for the glory of God and the good of men.

20. As to her gifts, she has a clear apprehension and a deep knowledge of the things of God, a quick discernment of spirits, and no small insight into the devices of Satan. She has been trained up, more especially for these ten years, in the word of truth, having constantly attended both the morning and evening preaching, without despising the meanest of our preachers. She is well acquainted with, and exercised in, our method of leading souls, having gone through all our little offices, and discharged them all entirely well. She has a ready utterance, a spirit of convincing as well as of persuasive speech, a winning address, an agreeable carriage, in whatever company she is engaged. By means of all which she is exceedingly beloved, almost wherever she goes, and is dear, in an uncommon manner, to great numbers of the people.

21. And as to the fruit of her labours, I never yet heard or read of any woman so owned of God; so many have been convinced of sin in her bands and classes, and under her prayers. I particularly insist upon this: if ever I have a wife, she ought to be the most careful woman in the kingdom, not barely one who probably may be so (I could not be content to run such a hazard), but one that undeniably is so. Now, show me the woman in England, Wales, or Ireland, who has done so much good as Grace Murray. I will say no more. Show me one in all the English annals, whom God has so employed in so high a degree; I might say, in all the history of the church from the death of our Lord to this day. This is no hyperbole, but plain, demonstrable fact, and if it be, who so proper to be my wife?

22. I cannot doubt but such a person being constantly with me (for she is both willing and able to accompany me in all my journeys, another circumstance which is absolutely necessary in such a helper as I want), would be so far from being a hinderance to my work, that she would remove many hinderances out of my way.

She would, in a great measure, either prevent or remove those bodily weaknesses or disorders which now increase fast upon me. By caring for me she would free me from a thousand cares, and enable me to serve God with less distraction. She is and would be a continual defence (under God) against unholy desires and inordinate affections, which I never did entirely conquer for six months together, before my intercourse with her. Now that 'tis "kreîsson mâllon gameîn è epithumeîsthai," is owned, and marriage being supposed, point out a proper person.

23. But she would not only remove hindrances, but such a friend and fellow-labourer (I do not say probably would, but actually does) greatly assists and furthers me in my work, enlivening my dull and dead affections, composing and calming my hurried thoughts, sweetening my spirits when they are rough and harsh, and convincing me of what is true, or persuading me to what is right, when perhaps no other would or could; at the same time, loosening my soul from all below, and raising it up to God.

24. She would likewise remove many hinderances from others, women in particular; she would guard many from inordinate affection for me, to which they would be far less exposed, both because they would have far less hope of success, and because I should converse far more sparingly with them, perhaps not in private with any young women at all, at least not with any member of our own Societies.

25. And she might directly further the work by employing all her grace and gifts on that very thing; in regulating female classes and bands; in examining, instructing, reproving, comforting; in awakening souls (under God), bringing them to the faith and building them up therein. Therefore all my seven arguments against marriage are totally set aside; nay, some of them seem to prove, both that I ought to marry, and that Grace Murray is the person.

26. But it is objected to this,—1. That my marrying her would turn the greater part of our preachers out of the way, insomuch that they would despise my authority, and act no more in conjunction with me. 2. That it would break up our Societies, and cause them to cry out, "Every man to his tents, O Israel." 3. That it would give such scandal to the world as never could be removed.

27. I cannot receive any one of these propositions without proof; let us hear then, the reasons that support them:—

The first is, "Because she is low-born." Her parents were poor labouring people.

I answer, "This weighs nothing with me, as it does not prevent either her grace or gifts. Besides, whoever I marry, I believe it will not be a gentlewoman; I despair of finding any such, so qualified."

28. The second reason is, "Because she was my servant." I

answer, "I therefore like her the better. By that means, *intus et in cute novi*.[1] By living with her so long under one roof, I am as secure against being deceived in her as I can well be against being deceived in anyone. Indeed I should scruple in marrying any woman who had not done so for some time."

29. A third reason is, "She has travelled with me six months." With regard to this, I grant some would probably say, "she was my mistress before she was my wife." And let them say this; it would hurt just as much as a thousand things they have said before. But let them know withal I should never marry any woman till I had proof she would travel with me. It is my belief that when these things were fairly represented, not only nineteen in twenty of our preachers and societies would be satisfied, but also the reasonable part of the world, and, for the rest, the good would outweigh that evil.

30. But the fourth and grand reason is behind, "She is already engaged to another." I ask, "Where?" You say, "At Epworth;" J. B. then asked, "Will you marry me?" and she replied, "I will."

I grant it; but without insisting upon numerous circumstances, which account for her weakness in so doing, I insist on one only,— "She was contracted before; therefore this promise was null and void. And that contract was far stronger than this; at Epworth she only said, "I will take you;" at Dublin she said, "I do."

"But before she went to Dublin, she consented in Derbyshire to J. B.'s proposal." I grant this also; but before that she had consented to my proposal at Newcastle. Therefore, what was done at Newcastle, vacated a thing of the same kind done afterwards in Derbyshire; and the contract made *de præsento* at Dublin, vacated the contract *de futuro* made at Epworth.

31. "But J. B. (this is the fifth reason) will not believe this; therefore he will expose you as having married his wife." Perhaps he will believe it by and by; and I am willing to stay any reasonable time till he does; at least there is reason to think most others will believe it, when a fair state of the case is laid before them.

32. But there is one reason more, "you have said and have printed, that you would never marry." This is a mistake; I have never said any more either in public or private than, "I do not design to marry; and I said true, I did not design it, nor thought that I ever should, when I said so; but the reasons which I then had against, are now wholly removed, I never said so much as this in print. Indeed I published *Thoughts on Marriage*, but in our last conference I was convinced they were not just, and accordingly I then altered them. And as to those words in the appeal, "My

[1] I know her intimately, and to the heart's core.

wife and children are yet unborn," they imply no more, by natural construction, nor did I then intend any more thereby, than that I had neither wife nor children at that time, viz. in the year 1744.

The short is this,—1. I have scriptural reason to marry; 2. I know no person so proper as this.

32. The next morning my brother spoke more warmly, till I left him and W. Shent together. I came back about one, and found they had both taken horse some hours before. I had appointed to preach the next night at Hineley Hill. About two I set out. My horse being worn ought, was all in a sweat before he had gone a mile; and I was extremely weak myself, having had a flux for several days. But God was pleased to strengthen both man and beast, so that both grew better every hour.

33. I had a solemn and delightful ride to Keswick, having my mind stayed on God. I took horse at the half hour past three in the morning. There was neither moon nor stars, but a thick mist; so that I could see no road nor anything else; but I went as right as if it had been noon-day. When I came near Penruddock Moor, the mist vanished, the stars appeared, and the dawn of the morning; so I imagined all the danger was passed. But when I was in the midst of the moor the mist fell again on every side, and I quickly lost my way. I began praying; immediately it cleared off, and I recovered the high road. On Alston Moor I missed my way again, and what I believe no stranger ever did before, rode straight through all the bogs, without any stop, till I came to the Vale, and thence to Hineley Hill.

34. Hannah Broadwood (at whose house I left S. M.) met me at a little distance from it, and said, "Mr. Charles left us two hours since, and carried S. M.[1] behind him." I said "The Lord gave, and the Lord hath taken away: blessed be the name of the Lord!" Soon after James Broadwood came in; he looked at me, and burst into tears. I said, I must go on to Newcastle. James said, "No; I will go, and with God's leave bring her back." In a quarter of an hour he took horse, and I calmly committed the cause to God!

35. A large congregation met in the evening. I expounded part of the 20th chapter of the Revelations. But oh! what a time was this! It was as though we were already standing before the great white throne! God was no less present with us in prayer. When one just by me cried with a loud and bitter cry, I prayed God would give us a token that all these things should work together for good. He did; He wrote pardon upon her heart, and we all rejoiced unto Him with reverence.

36. Thursday, the 28th, was a day which I set apart for seeking

[1] Sister Murray.

God with fasting and prayer. John Brown and B. Hopper were with me. It was a day never to be forgotten. I was calm, though sad; looking for help from Him only, to whom all things are possible. We had all free access to the throne of grace, and a sure trust that "God would do all things well."

I now closely examined myself, touching what was so confidently laid to my charge, viz; *Inordinate affection.* And I clearly perceived, that I had never before had so strong an affection for any person under Heaven; which I could easily account for by the concurrence of so many little streams in one: gratitude for blessings of various kinds which God had given me by her; esteem upon many accounts; regard for my whole health both of soul and body; and desire of enlarging the work of God,—all conspired with a conviction of her entire love to me, to confirm and increase my affection. But yet I could not perceive it was *inordinate* by any of the marks which use to attend such an affection. For, 1. *Inordinate affection* leads from God; but this continually led me to Him. 2. *Inordinate affection* makes us less desirous of doing the works of God, less zealous to pray, preach, or do good in any kind; but this increased my desire of doing good in every kind, and my zeal to do all the works of God. 3. *Inordinate affection* makes us cold and dead in preaching, praying, or any other office of religion; but this made me more alive in all, more sensible of the power and presence of God. 4. *Inordinate affection* creates jealousy towards rivals and resentment towards them that oppose it; but I never felt a minute's jealousy even of J. B., nor a minute's resentment towards those who tore her from me. 5. *Inordinate affection* necessarily creates uneasiness in the absence of the object of it; whereas I was never uneasy, neither in parting nor *after* it, no more than if she had been a common person. For all these reasons (and I might mention several more) I could not conceive that mine was an inordinate affection, unless it was *such* an inordinate affection as was never before from the beginning of the world.

37. I need add no more, than that if I had had more regard for her I loved, than for the work of God, I should now have gone on straight to Newcastle, and not back to Whitehaven. I know this was giving up all; but I knew God called: and therefore, on Friday, 29th, set out. The storm was full in my face, and exceedingly high, so that I had much difficulty to sit my horse, particularly as I was riding over the broad, bare backs of those enormous mountains. However, I kept on as I could, till I came to the brow of Hatside. So thick a fog then fell, that I was soon out of all road, and knew not which way to turn. I lifted up my heart. The fog vanished in a moment, and I saw Gamblesby, to which I was going. I set out early on Saturday, 30th, and in the afternoon reached White-

haven. To day I resumed my spare diet, which I shall probably quit no more.

38. Sunday, October 1st, I was in great heaviness; my heart sinking in me like a stone; only so long as I was preaching, I felt ease. When I had done, the weight returned. I went to church sorrowful and very heavy, though I knew not any particular cause. And God found me there: not only the lessons, both morning and afternoon, containing the account of the three children in the Fiery Furnace, of Daniel in the Lions' Den, and of our Lord's walking on the water and calming the storm, seemed all designed for me; but even the Psalms which were sung all the day; I found likewise much refreshment in the sacrament. When I came home I took up a Common Prayer-Book, and opened upon these words: "Deliver me not over unto the will of mine adversaries; for there are false witnesses risen up against me, and such as speak wrong. I should utterly have fainted; but that I believe verily to see the goodness of the Lord in the land of the living. Oh, tarry thou the Lord's leisure; be strong, and He shall comfort thy heart, and put thou thy trust in the Lord," Psalm 27, 14, &c.

39. In the evening my heaviness returned, but with much of the spirit of prayer. It seemed to me that I ought not to linger here; and yet I know not whither to go, till Mr. P. asked, "Will you go to Leeds on Tuesday?" Immediately my mind was easy; I had sent notice of being there on Wednesday evening, but it was gone out of my thoughts. I determind to go; only I was concerned to leave Whitehaven without a preacher.

40. We then poured out our hearts before God; and I was led I know not how to ask, that if he saw good, He would show what would be the end of these things, in dreams or visions of the night. I dreamed I saw a man bring out G. M.,[1] who told her, she was condemned to die; and that all things were now in readiness for the execution of that sentence. She spoke not one word, nor showed any reluctance, but walked up with him to the place. The sentence was executed without her stirring either hand or foot. I looked at her, till I saw her face turn black. Then I could not bear it, but went away; but I returned quickly, and desired she might be cut down. She was then laid upon a bed. I sat by, mourning over her. She came to herself, and began to speak, and I awaked.

41. Monday, the 2nd, I dedicated to God in fasting and solemn prayer. We had free access to the throne of grace, and I found my will more resigned. In the evening Jos. Cownley came, and brought me a letter from Mr. Whitefield, pressing me much to meet my brother and him at Leeds on Wednesday evening. My

[1] Grace Murray.

brother had likewise charged J. C. "If I would not come, to come hither himself."

42. Tuesday, 3rd, we rode to Old-Hutton, and about nine next night reached Leeds. Here I found not my brother, but Mr. Whitefield. I lay down by him on the bed. He told me my brother would not come until J. B. and G. Murray were married. I was troubled; he perceived it; he wept and prayed over me, but I could not shed a tear. He said all that was in his power to comfort me; but it was in vain. He told me "it was his judgment that she was my wife, and that he had said so to J. B., that he would fain have persuaded them to wait, and not to marry till they had seen me; but that my brother's impetuosity prevailed and bore down all before it."

43. I fet no murmuring thought, but deep distress. I accepted the just punishment of my manifold unfaithfulness, and therefore could not complain; but I felt the loss both to me and the people, which I did not expect could ever be repaired. I tried to sleep, but I tried in vain, for sleep was fled from my eyes. I was in a burning fever, and more and more thoughts crowding into my mind, I perceived if this continued long, it would affect my senses. But God took that matter into His hand, giving me, on a sudden, sound and quiet sleep.

44. Thursday, 5th, about eight, one came in from Newcastle, and told us, "they were married on Tuesday." My brother came an hour after. I felt no anger, yet I did not desire to see him; but Mr. Whitefield constrained me. After a few words had passed he accosted me with, "I renounce all intercourse with you, but what I would have with an heathen man or a publican." I felt little emotion; it was only adding a drop of water to a drowning man; yet I calmly accepted his renunciation, and acquiesced therein. Poor Mr. Whitefield and J. Nelson burst into tears. They prayed, cried, and entreated, till the storm passed away. We could not speak, but only fell on each other's neck.

45. J. B. then came in. Neither of us could speak; but we kissed each other, and wept. Soon after I talked with my brother alone; he seemed utterly amazed; he clearly saw I was not what he had thought, and now blamed her only; which confirmed me in believing my presage was true, and I shall see her face no more. I

46. But the great mystery to me was this; by what means under heaven could she (who I knew, whatever others thought, had loved me for ten years as her own soul) be prevailed upon to marry another? especially after so solemn a contract with me. I could not unravel it till I read my brother's papers; what I learned from them and some others was this:—

47. Her mind was quite settled when I left her at Hineley Hill,

nor had she any more thoughts of J. B. than of John Jones. On Saturday and Monday was the same. On Monday she wrote to S. Proctor in these words. "If Mr. B. comes to Newcastle write to me immediately, for I must not see him, it will tear my soul to pieces, seeing I can by no means help him now; for whom God hath joined together no man can put asunder; and well am I assured it was His will it should be so. Glory be to God; I find Him mightily present with me. My soul is athirst for God and the good of souls; I find my former zeal returned; I trust I shall be more bold in the cause of Christ than ever. The Lord hath brought strange things to pass; what I never looked for. Praise the Lord, O my soul, who hath cast thy lot in a fair ground!"

On Tuesday, 26th, she was much in prayer, and appeared exceeding thankful to God, and more and more fixed every hour, to live and die with me.

48. On Wednesday, 27th, she was exceedingly troubled at my letter from Whitehaven; Hannah Broadwood could in no wise comfort her; but it threw her into vehement prayer. About eleven my brother came; he kissed her, and said, "Grace Murray, you have broken my heart." Then he dropped down. It is easy to conceive what impression this must make on so tender a mind as hers. Soon after he put into her hands the following letter, writen the day before.

"My dear Sister and Friend,

"What shall I say to you? I would not willingly grieve you, though you have well nigh broken my heart; and still you will be the occasion of bringing down my hairs with sorrow to the grave. Neither my soul nor my body will ever recover the wound; in this life I mean. But *there* the weary are at rest; *there* all tears are wiped away from our eyes. Fain would I hope that you can say something in your defence (when I come to talk with you) which now I know not. But the case thus appears to me; you promised J. B. to marry him, since which you engaged yourself to another. How is this possible? and who is this other? One of such importance, that his doing so dishonest an action, would destroy both himself and me and the whole work of God. It was on the very brink of ruin; but the snare is broken, and we are delivered. I am returning with my brother straight to London; but could not leave the country without writing to you. Still I would suspend my judgment in that love which hopeth all things. But oh! how humbled, how thankful ought you to be at your almost miraculous deliverance! Had not the Lord restrained you, what a scandal had you brought upon the Gospel; nay, and you would have left your name as a curse upon God's people. But I spare you, and hope in ignorance you did it. Be not therefore troubled over

much; I never intend to speak to you a harsh word about it; but pray for you and love you, till we meet at the marriage-supper of the Lamb."

49. She must have been more than human, if this letter delivered with such circumstances, had not wrought the desired effect, especially as she supposed it was written when I was by, and therefore contained my judgment as well as his. So all hope of me was utterly cut off; I was returning straight to London with my brother. I was supposed to have seen us both on "the very brink of ruin, to rejoice that the snare was broken, and join in exhorting her to be thankful for our almost miraculous deliverence."

What wonder, then, that when he asked, "Are you willing to go with me to Leeds, to meet my brother and J. B. there," she should readily consent? particularly as she believed, that it was all by my own appointment.

50 About one he took her behind him, and set out. At first he designed to go by way of Newcastle; but being afraid every moment that I was just at his heels, he used several stratagems to elude his pursuer, and at last turned out of the Newcastle road, and made straight for Durham; but in a little time they lost the way, and so were glad to lodge at T. Brown's at Newland.

She appeared very cheerful when they came in; but it was not so when she was retired; for she did not sleep all night, but lay tumbling and tossing too and fro, as one in deep distress.

51. Upon the supposition, that she loved J. B. best, this was utterly unintelligible; for what could she desire more? She was going, with my full consent, to marry him immediately; but, upon the contrary supposition, the mixture of cheerfulness and sadness is easily to be understood. Looking on the things that were past in the same light with my brother, and now believing she really belonged to J. B., and that by giving herself up to him, she should at once clear her conscience, preserve one she tenderly loved from ruin, and prevent so many dreadful consequences, she rejoiced and sung praise, as having escaped out of a snare, and found a great deliverance; but still she could not prevent many doubts, whether she belonged to him or not, nor probably some fears, that all things had not been fairly represented to her. Above all, her love to me, together with the remembrance of many things which had passed between us, would sometimes return, quash all her joy, and be as a sword piercing her heart.

52. In the morning they rode on to Ferry-Hill, and were informed, "J. B. was at Newcastle." She cheerfully said, "Let us go, let us go to him;" but my brother being informed, "he would have nothing to do with her," dropped her at Mr. Bell's, two miles short of the town, and went forward himself to reconcile him to her.

53. The way by which he endeavoured to do this, was by laying all the blame upon me, as having used my whole art and authority to seduce another man's wife. This was the scope of all his discourse at Newcastle. The effect of what he and J. B. said (for they spoke just alike) was, that all in the house (unless one or two that were instant in prayer) were set on fire, filled with anger and confusion, and driven to their wit's end. S. Proctor would leave the house immediately; John Whitford would preach with Mr. W. no more; Mat. Errington dreamed the house itself was all in flames (and most certainly it was); another dreamer went a step further, and saw Mr. W. in hell fire; Jane Keith was peremptory, "John W. is a child of the devil," coming pretty near J. B. himself, whose repeated words were, "If John W. is not damned, there is no God."

54. When J. B. was so clearly convinced "the fault lay all in me," G. M. and he were brought together. She fell at his feet, acknowledged she had used him ill, and begged he would forgive her. To satisfy her entirely as to any scruple which might remain with regard to me, one was brought in to assure her, "I had given her up, and would have nothing more to say to her; only I had ordered him to procure some place among the country-societies, where she might live privately." Upon this, one cried out, "Good God! what will the world say? He is tired of her, and so thrusts his Wh— into a corner. Sister M., will you consent to this?" She answered, "No; I will die first." So, seeing no other way, she frankly declared, "I *will* have J. B., if he will have *me*."

55. On Tuesday morning, Oct. 3rd, they were married. They all then rode on contentedly to Leeds, to give me the meeting there, as well that I might have the pleasure of seeing the bride, as that I might acknowledge my sin (those were my brother's expressions), before J. B. and them all.

56. But this I was not altogether ready to do; neither did I apprehend she desired my company any more; till on Friday, Oct. 6th, I was informed, "Both J. B. and his wife desired to see me." I went; but oh! what an interview! it was not soon that words could find their way. We sat weeping at each other, till I asked her, "What did you say to my brother, to make him accost me thus?" She fell at my feet, and said "she never had spoken nor could speak against me," uttering many other words to the same effect, in the midst of numberless sighs and tears. Before she rose, he fell on his knees too, and asked my pardon for what he had spoken of me. Between them both I knew not what to say or do. I can forgive, but who can redress the wrong.

57. After dinner I talked with her alone. She averred with the utmost emotion, being all dissolved in tears, that she never laid the

blame upon me, whom she knew to be entirely innocent; that she would rather die than speak against one to whom she had so deep obligations; that at the time I first spoke to her at Newcastle she loved me above all persons living; that after her engagement with J. B. her heart was divided till she went to Ireland; that then it was wholly with me, and from that time till J. B. met us at Epworth; that after his speaking she was divided again, till I talked with her upon the road, from which hour she loved me more and more, till we parted at Hineley Hill; that, when my brother took her thence she thought he was carrying her to me; that, when she knew more of his design, she told him, "I will do nothing till I have seen Mr. W.," but that, when it was told her at Newcastle, among a thousand other things, "Mr. W. will have nothing to say to you," then she said, "Well, I will have Mr. B. if he will have me." If these things are so, hardly has such a case been from the beginning of the world!

A SHORT ACCOUNT OF THE WHOLE I DREW UP A FEW DAYS AFTER IN THE FOLLOWING LINES, IN RIDING BETWEEN LEEDS AND NEWCASTLE.

I.

O Lord! I bow my sinful head!
Righteous are all thy ways with man!
Yet suffer me with Thee to plead,
With lowly reverence to complain;
With deep unutter'd grief to groan:
Oh! what is this that Thou hast done?

II.

Oft as thro' giddy youth I roved,
And danced along the flowery way,
By chance or thoughtless passion moved,
An easy, unsuspicious prey
I fell, while love's envenomed dart
Thrilled thro' my veins and tore my heart.

III.

At length by sad experience taught,
Firm I shook off the abject yoke,
Abhorred his sweetly poisonous draught,
Thro' all his wily fetters broke;
Fixt my desires on things above,
And languished for celestial love.

IV.

Borne on the wings of sacred hope,
Long had I soared and spurned the ground,
When panting for the mountain-top,
My soul a kindred spirit found;
By Heaven entrusted to my care,
The daughter of my faith and prayer.

V.

In early dawn of life, serene,
Mild, sweet, and tender was her mood,
Her pleasing form spoke all within
Soft and compassionately good,
Listening to every wretch's care,
Mixing with each her friendly tear.

VI.

In dawn of life, to feed the poor,
Glad she her little all bestowed,
Wise to lay up a better store,
And hasting to be rich in God;
God, whom she sought with early care,
With reverence and with lowly fear.

VII.

Ere twice four years passed o'er her head,
Her infant breast with love he filled,
His gracious, glorious name revealed,
Till sweetly forced her heart to yield,
She groaned t' ascend Heaven's high abode,
To die into the arms of God.

VIII.

Yet warm with youth and beauty's pride,
Soon was her heedless soul betrayed,
From Heaven her footsteps turned aside,
O'er pleasure's flowery plains she strayed,
Fondly the toys of earth she sought,
And God was not in all her thought.

IX.

Not long. A messenger she saw,
Sent forth glad tidings to proclaim,
She heard with joy and wondering awe
His cry, "Sinners, behold the Lamb."
His eye her inmost nature shook,
His word her heart in pieces broke.

X.

Her bosom heaved with labouring sighs,
And groaned th' unutterable prayer;
As rivers from her streaming eyes,
Fast flowed the never ceasing tear,
Till Jesus spake, "Thy mourning's o'er!
Believe, rejoice, and weep no more!"

XI.

She heard; pure love her soul o'erflowed,
Sorrow and sighing fled away;
With sacred zeal her spirit glowed,
Panting His every word t' obey;
Her faith by plenteous fruits she showed,
And all her works were wrought in God.

XII.

Nor works alone her faith approved;
Soon in affliction's furnace tried
By him whom next to Heaven she loved,
As silver seven times purified,
Shone midst the flames her constant mind,
Emerged, and left its dross behind.

XIII.

When death in freshest strength of years
Her much loved friend tore from her breast,
Awhile she poured her plaints and tears;
But quickly turning to her rest,
"Thy Will be done" she meekly cried,
"Suffice, for me the Saviour died."

XIV.

Then first I viewed with fixed regard
Her artless tears in silence flow;
"For thee are better things prepared,"
I said, "Go forth with Jesus, go;
My Master's peace be on thy soul,
Till perfect love shall make thee whole."

XV.

But, Oh! what trials are in store
For those whom God delights to bless;
Abandon'd soon to Satan's power,
Sifted as wheat, from the abyss,
The lowest deep, she groaned aloud,
"Where is my joy, my hope, my God?"

XVI.

In chains of horrid darkness bound,
Torn by the dogs of hell she lay;
By fear and sin encompassed round,
Anguish and pain and huge dismay,
Till the loud, bitter cry out-broke,
"My God, why hast thou me forsook?"

XVII.

Yet bowing down her fainting head,
And sinking to the gulf beneath,
She flew to every sinner's aid,
To snatch him from the sinner's death.
"Though justly I am lost," she cried
"Live thou! for thee the Saviour died."

XVIII.

But, when again his glory shone,
When God anew unveiled his face,
What heavenly zeal, what love unknown,
What strong, unuttered tenderness!
For every soul her heart o'erflowed!
What longing to be spent for God!

XIX.

I saw her run with winged speed
In works of faith and labouring love;
I saw her glorious toil succeed,
And showers of blessings from above
Crowning her warm effectual prayer,
And glorified my God in her.

XX.

Yet while to all, her tender mind
In streams of pure affection flowed
To one by ties peculiar joined,
One only less beloved than God,
Myself, she said, "my soul I owe,
My Guardian Angel here below."

XXI.

From heaven the grateful ardour came,
Pure from the dross of low desire;
Well pleased I marked the guiltless frame,
Nor dared to damp the sacred fire;
Heaven's choicest gift on man bestowed,
Strengthening our hearts and hands in God.

XXII.

'T was now I bowed my aching head,
While sickness shook the house of clay,
Duteous she ran with humble speed,
Love's tenderest offices to pay;
To ease my pain, to sooth my care,
T' uphold my feeble hands in prayer.

XXIII.

Amazed I cried, "Surely for me
A help prepared of Heaven thou art!
Thankful I take the gift from thee,
O Lord, nor aught on earth shall part
The souls, whom thou hast joined above
In lasting bonds of sacred love."

XXIV.

Abashed she spake, "Oh, what is this,
Far above all my boldest hope!
Can God, beyond my utmost wish,
Thus lift his worthless handmaid up?
This only could my soul desire,
This only (had I dared) require."

XXV.

From that glad hour, with growing love,
Heaven's latest, dearest gift I viewed;
While pleased each moment to improve,
We urged our way with strength renewed,
Our one desire, our common aim,
T' extol our gracious Master's name.

XXVI.

Companions now in weal and woe
No power on earth could us divide,
Nor summer's heat nor wintry snow
Could tear my partner from my side;
Nor toil, nor weariness, nor pain,
Nor horrors of the angry main.

XXVII.

Oft, (tho' as yet the nuptial tie
Was not) clasping her hand in mine,
"What force," she said, "beneath the sky
Can now our well-knit souls disjoin?
With thee I'd go to India's coast,
To worlds in distant oceans lost."

XXVIII.

Such was the friend, than life more dear,
Whom in one luckless baleful hour,
(For ever mentioned with a tear)
The tempest's unresisted power;
(Oh, the unutterable smart!)
Tore from my inly bleeding heart.

XXIX.

Unsearchable Thy judgments are,
O Lord, a bottomless abyss;
Yet sure Thy love, Thy guardian care,
O'er all Thy works extended is.
Oh! why didst Thou the blessing send?
Or why thus snatch away my friend?

XXX.

What Thou hast done, I know not now,
Suffice I shall hereafter know,
Beneath Thy chastening hand I bow;
That still I live to Thee I owe.
Oh, teach thy deeply-humbled son
To say, "Father, Thy will be done."

XXXI.

Teach me from every pleasing snare
To keep the issue of my heart;
Be thou my Love, my Joy, my Fear;
Thou my Eternal Portion art.
Be thou my never-failing Friend,
And love, oh, love me, to the end.

APPENDIX.*

JOHN WESLEY.

As I meet occasionally with unobserved particulars of this extraordinary man, I think it well to have a place in my Collections in which I can enter them, and present them, as at one view, to any person who may hereafter be disposed to look with more critical attention than has ever yet been given to his history.

I shall be content to place them here as they occur, anecdotically, and they may hereafter be arranged and systematized.

His attachment to an engaging person, originally Grace Norman, but when he knew her, Grace Murray, a widow, is a remarkable event in his early life, on which his biographers have not been over-forward to throw a strong light, nor has he himself said much (if anything), about it in his Journal. Yet, if we may trust a MS. account of it which purports to have been written by himself, it is an important event in his life, and must have exercised no inconsiderable amount of influence on his public conduct, while he was living under the uncertainty of what he ought to do, and perhaps, we may say, trifling with the affections of an amiable woman, who, on her part, appears to have been not unwilling to have two strings to her bow, and who was obviously, through the whole time, very much disposed to a second settlement in life, not improperly so, or over-eagerly.

This MS. is now in the British Museum, amongst those known as "Additional," and is number 7119. It is a small 12mo, beautifully written, extending from p. 1 to p. 105, after which are four pages more, containing a poetical account of the affair in Wesley's own hand, being a repetition of the poem which is incorporated in the prose narrative. The lettering on the back of the MS. is,—"John Wesley's Account of a Love-Affair.—*Mus. Brit. Ex legato N. Hart,* 7119 *Plut. CLIV. A.*"

* Respecting this, see Note at the end of the "Preliminary Remarks."

There is the following account of the way in which it came to the Museum:—

> "This book, An Account of an Amour of John Wesley, the chief of the Methodist sect (copied by an Amanuensis) was given to me by Noah Vazielle, of Stratford, in co. Essex, whose mother had been married to the said J. W. and that the verses at the latter end are besides separate in this book, in the hand-writing of the said J. W.—*Quod attestor Naphtaly Hart, noty. pubc. London, June 4th,* 1788."

When Hart died, and it came by his will to the Museum, I do not at present know; but this might be discovered without much difficulty.* The above note, it will be perceived, was written in the life-time of Wesley, and in the life-time also of Grace, who lived to her 89th year, and died Feb. 23, 1803.

I do not know that any reference is made to this MS. by writers on the life of Wesley, and I imagine that few persons knew of its existence till, in 1848, it was printed by Mr. Charles Hook, an elderly person, whose profession it is to copy manuscripts for gentlemen, and who spends the greater part of his life in the Reading Room at the Museum. John Russell Smith was his publisher, and the impression, which I think Hook told me was of 500 copies, were soon disposed of. It is an 8vo, of 53 pages.

Mr. Hook, for what reason I know not, has kept back all information respecting the deposit of the MS. His title is this—

> "Narrative of a Remarkable Transaction in the Early Life of John Wesley. From an Original Manuscript, in his own hand-writing, never before published."

Now, it was neither right to withhold information where the MS. might be consulted, nor to state that it is in Wesley's own handwriting, in the face of the memorandum which assigns it to an amanuensis. This is calculated to throw discredit upon it; and the "Preliminary Remarks" which he makes are not calculated to establish the credit of the MS. since they consist of nothing more than the apposition of a few passgaes in Wesley's printed Journal, with which he shows that certain passages in the MS. are congruous: because, if it be a fiction, no doubt the author of it would take care that it was conformable in point of data and matter of fact to that with which it was certain it would be at once compared. These "Preliminary Remarks" are also, in a material point, at

* Mr. R. Sims, of the MS. Department, Brit. Mus., has kindly furnished the publisher with the following information:—"With respect to the Add. MS. 7119, it was bequeathed to the Trustees by Mr. Napthaly Hart, of Camden Street, Islington, and *received* 9th May, 1829, together with seventeen others. The wording of the Will is, "all my Common Place Books, lettered A—L, and also all the MSS. which I may be possessed of at the time of my decease." I cannot find any further account of him. The MS. in question had for many years been kept from the public eye by order of the Trustees, when Mr. Hook sought and obtained permission to copy it."

variance with his title-page, the editor stating that "the body of the work is a copy only."

I know not that any suspicions are entertained of its genuineness, though I think it may be open to suspicion as to the prose part. But, in fact, I never heard any person speak of it except the editor; and when I named it, Sept. 2nd, 1853, to Mr. John Holland, of Sheffield, who knows very much of the History of Methodism, I found that he had never heard of it, and he informed me that several things of the kind had been written, and, as I understood him, not as fictions professedly so, but to pass in the world as genuine history.

If the verses be certainly in Wesley's own hand-writing, a point that may be easily determined, then I think that whatever can be collected from it must be regarded as so much matter of fact; and if so, it would almost follow that the prose part of the MS. is also to be received as a genuine fragment of biography. The two are, however, to be considered apart, and as the portion of the higher authority, I shall take the verse first, and collect from it the facts which it contains. It is entitled—

> "A Short Account of the whole I drew up a few days after in the following lines: in riding between Leeds and Newcastle."

He begins with an impassioned appeal to God, as a man suffering deeply in a disappointment,—"Oh! what is this that Thou hast done?" He then recalls his early life, in which he charges himself with having been of an amorous disposition, till at length he had

> Fix'd his desires on things above,
> And languished for celestial love.

While in this frame, he found a kindred spirit by heaven entrusted to his care,—"The daughter of my faith and prayer." He then dwells on her perfections, earthly and spiritual, her early piety, her falling off to the love of pleasure, her recovery by the voice of a preacher, her joy in the Lord, her afflictions, particularly in the loss of her husband at an early period of her life, his own comforting of her, her despondency and recovery from it, her zeal and religious love, her efforts of charity under his own observation. He then touches upon her owning a peculiar affection for himself, her attention to him in sickness, his confident feeling that she was ordained of heaven a help-mate for him, and his acceptance of her as such. He makes her a distinct offer, which she accepts with expressions of thankfulness to heaven. They now became constant companions engaged in the same works, and he receives from her strong and repeated assurances of her fondness for him. Then in the 28th stanza, his woe when she was torn from his bleeding heart, and the poem ends with an expression of religious submission.

Let us now go to the prose story, which we are to receive as written by himself, but of which only a copy exists.

In June, 1748, at a Conference in London, the question of ministers' marriages was debated, and he was convinced that a Believer might marry.

[Let us just observe dates. Wesley was born June 17, 1703, so that he was then 45. Grace Murray was born January 23, 1715, and so aged 33.]

In August, 1748, Wesley was taken ill at Newcastle, when she attended him continually. He, in fact, when recovered, proposes to her, and she frankly accepts; and when he leaves Newcastle, he assures her that he regards her as one whom God had given him to be a help-mate, and that, though they must then part, he trusted that they should meet to part no more: that he would take her with him to Ireland. She objects to their being separated, and he takes her with him in his journies through Yorkshire and Derbyshire, and found her unspeakably useful in the Societies. He at length leaves her in Cheshire with J[ohn] Bennet [who was one of his Preachers.]

[It appears by the Journal, that this sickness was at the most of only three days duration—4th, 5th, and 6th of August. On the 4th, however, he was able to preach at Spen, and on the 5th at Horsley, and he preached again on the 7th. He travelled about in the neighbourhood of Newcastle, till the 16th, when he left it for Yorkshire and Lancashire; and at the end of the month he was at Chinley, where John Bennet lived. On Sept. 2nd, he set out for the West, and came round to London. In January he was in London, thinking of answering Middleton's book against the Fathers, and of a journey to Holland. But he goes into Wales, where he marries his brother to Sarah Gwynne, and April 15, goes on board for Ireland, where he remains till July 20, that is 1749.]

He had left Grace we see with Bennet; and not long after, according to the MS., he receives a letter from Bennet, asking his consent that he should marry the lady. She also writes that she believes it is the will of God. Hence, says he, I date her fall. Wesley writes a mild answer, supposing that the marriage had taken place. She replied in so affectionate a manner, that he thought the whole design was at an end. Wesley was afterwards told by Bennet himself, that she had assured him there was no contract between her and Mr. Wesley, as he had suspected there was.

The difficulty here is to find a justification for her conduct. Wesley writes to her, and she answers that she would live and die with him. Bennet writes to her, and she answers in the tenderest manner; and particularly in February, that "if he loved her he must meet her at Sheffield, for she was sent for to Ireland, and if

he did not come now, she could not answer for what might follow." Wesley writes as if he had an honourable regard for her and saw the excuse of which her conduct admitted.

Bennet was prevented, by the unexpected death of a brother-in-law, from meeting her at Sheffield. So Grace, seeing nothing of him, comes on to Bristol, where Wesley then was. This seems, by comparison with the Diary, to have been in October, 1748. In this singular state of affairs, she spoke unreservedly of what had passed between her and Bennet, expressed her opinion that the contract she had made with him was binding, that she had thought it impossible that a marriage with Wesley could ever take place; but Wesley urged upon her that the contract with him *was* binding, and she becomes convinced that it was so.

[One of the remarkable circumstances of the case, is the rapidity with which these important events follow one another. The illness, and Wesley's declaration, 4-6th August. He leaves her with Bennet, probably early in September. She receives Bennet's addresses, accepts him, leaves him, and goes to Wesley, at Bristol, in October.]

When Wesley went to Ireland, she accompanied him as a servant, friend, and fellow-labourer in the Gospel. His affection for her increased, and they were even contracted by a *contract de presenti*. Her correspondence with Bennet was wholly discontinued, and the affair was thought to be over. She returned with him to Bristol in September, 1749. Here she "hears some idle tales concerning me and Molly Francis," and in a sudden vehement fit of jealousy, writes a loving letter to Bennet. She tells this to Wesley. Bennet's passion revives, and he writes her word that he would meet her when she came into the North. When Wesley removed from Bristol to London, she accompanied him; and there, dropping an expression of Wesley's intentions to a Mr. M., he strongly advises her to think no more of it as a thing that ought not to be.

Soon after, they set out together for the North; and at Epworth, Bennet met them.

[It appears, from the Diary, that Wesley was in that neighbourhood from 29 August to 3 Sept. 1749.]

Wesley speaks freely with Bennet, and learns from him, that she had sent to him all his letters. This led him to think that Bennet had the best right to her, and that they should marry without delay. He writes to her that he thought it was not proper she and I should converse any more together. A curious scene now comes on. She begged him not to say so unless he meant to kill her, using many other tender expressions. Wesley is much distressed, and before he had recovered himself, Bennet came in. He claimed her as his right. With much reluctance, he determines to give up all interest

in her to Bennet, and leaves her in great anguish of his spirit. At two o'clock, word is brought to him, that Sister Murray is exceedingly ill, and obliged to keep her bed. Whereupon he visits her, and she tells him she loves no one so well as him, a thousand times better than she loves Bennet, but she is afraid, if she does not marry him, he will run mad, and showed a letter she had just received confirming that fear. In the evening Bennet came, and David Trathen, and they both urged her, till at length she said, "I will marry J. Bennet." But on the next morning, she tells all to Wesley, who was still more strongly convinced of her true affection for him, and of the pre-contract with him. On Wednesday, Sept. 6, he put it home to her, Which will you choose? when she declared again and again, "I am determined by conscience as well as inclination, to live and die with you."

[It is curious and interesting to compare with this strange state of his private affairs, the account in his Journal, of his public conduct. He travelled on this 6th of September, from Osmotherley to Newcastle, where he remained on the Thursday, leaving Newcastle on Friday, for Morpeth. At Newcastle he preached two evenings and two mornings.]

How he was employed on the 7th, we learn from the MS. where is a long letter addressed to Bennet, dated, Newcastle-upon-Tyne, Sept. 7, 1749. In this, he remonstrates strongly with Bennet, avows his intention to have married her, which has been frustrated by him in an interval in which he intended to consult his brother. Bennet had paid some attention to her while she was in Mr. Wesley's service, in the house at Newcastle, where Bennet was also, and when he left her with Bennet, in three days he solicited her again, and in a few days more, prevailed with her to promise him marriage.

[This letter appears to me *genuine*. If a fiction, it is one of the cleverest I ever read. But I cannot but think that Wesley dealt hardly with his humbler companion, whose conduct in the whole affair, does not appear to me to be in any degree blameworthy. Grace's conduct and Wesley's conduct are less easily justified or excused.]

This letter never reached Bennet. William Shent had promised to deliver it, but never did so.

She also wrote to Bennet, telling him she was convinced they had both sinned in entering on any engagement at all, without Mr. Wesley's knowledge. [This is a sort of sin which I do not understand.]

Friday, Sept. 8, Wesley and she set out together towards Berwick, visiting the intermediate Societies. She gives fresh proof of her usefulness and her affection, "yet I would not consent to her repeated request, to *marry immediately*." [Poor young woman! This

was clearly a course to which Wesley had no right to offer any exception, if she chose to run the risk of the odium which might attend her treatment of Bennet. It is a curious complicated case, very unlike fiction, and I am persuaded of the genuineness of the short narrative]. Now see the reasons which Wesley gives for not complying.—(1) He must satisfy J. Bennet. (2) He must procure his brother's assent. (3) He must send an account of the reasons for the step to every helper and every Society in England, desiring their prayers. She said she should not be willing to stay above a year. I replied, perhaps less time will suffice. [I cannot but regard Wesley's conduct in this, with a feeling of strong disapprobation. He was depriving her of a very suitable settlement; he was keeping himself in the position of being willing to marry, or free to refuse, and not one of his three reasons will bear a close examination. He knew he could not satisfy J. Bennet. There was no necessity for a man of his age to ask the consent of a brother. He might use the third as an instrument for delay, at least as it was probable opinions would be divided. I don't think his conduct was honorable or just.]

At Berwick he continues his tantalizing course: and yet, on the 9th, he [wretch!] preaches on "Come unto me ye that are weary and heavy laden, and I will give you rest," when at the same time he was plaguing the heart out of an afflicted and affectionate young woman. It further appears from his Diary that, on the 11th and 12th, he was employed in writing, yet he spoke searching words to an earnestly attentive congregation; and on the 13th, he had "a delightful opportunity of describing and comforting the broken in heart."

The MS. shows us what he was writing. It was "The more remarkable passages of this young woman's life." This account corresponds well with the verses. [It was abominable that Wesley should engage her to inform him of all these private matters, unless he had fully made up his mind to marry her, and that immediately.] She seems to have been rather a forward girl, for at sixteen she was engaged in a love affair. She went to London to a sister in 1734, got in service there, and on May 13th, 1736, she married Mr. Murray, who in three or four days went to sea and was absent ten or eleven months, when she went to her parents. Had a miscarriage; joined him again in London; and was with him four months before he went to sea again. He left her with child, which was not born till after his return. She lives for some time at Portsmouth. Returns to London. Heard Mr. Whitefield and Mr. Wesley: became a zealous convert. Her state alarms her sister and her husband, who talk of placing her in a lunatic asylum in West Gardens. But he becomes reconciled to the course she was taking; she is

unwell; goes to Newcastle—her native air; her husband goes again to sea. Her father dies. In the beginning of 1741 her husband (who was returned) and she go from Newcastle to London. In or about May, 1742, Mr. Murray was drowned. Soon after she goes down to Newcastle and meets Mr. Wesley there. She then engages herself more particularly in his service for religious and charitable work; is appointed a leader of several classes. Mr. Wesley instructs her to go to London to bring down the best of her goods that she might live altogether in his house. She had taken her passage when a note is delivered to her from Mr. Wesley desiring she would stay in London when she was there. She had been falsely accused of slandering another woman. John Brydon at this time admired her. There was no engagement, yet it was commonly supposed she was on the point of marrying. In April, 1743, Wesley returned to London. She came thither soon after. Returned to Newcastle in August; lived a year in Wesley's family. Disliked S. Jackson, who appears to have been a fellow-servant. She leaves the place. John Brydon marries some one else. She tells Mr. Wesley a number of private circumstances in her religious history.

There are many particulars, not very material. She tells Mr. Wesley that Mr. Bennet proposed marriage to her the day after Mr. Wesley had left her; and that a day or two after she consented.

It is a long story filling from p. 14 to 32[1] of Mr. Hook's publication, and some part of it seems as if it could hardly have been written down from her dictation.

They remained in Berwick from Saturday to Thursday. She now treated him with the utmost confidence, frequently saying, "God has united us for ever." Wesley was hourly receiving from her strong proofs of her affection. At Newcastle he made inquiries about her "from all those who were disgusted at her, and inquired into their reasons for it." [Odious Man.] It is an extraordinary picture of half the women, who formed the Methodist society in this one of its head-quarters.—Petty, gossipping, ill-natured creatures.

On the 20th, Wesley tells the whole affair to Christopher Hooper, who undertakes to go to Chinley and try if he could not satisfy Bennet. At her request the contract made at Dublin is renewed. This was a formal affair, in the presence of witnesses. An hour after, Wesley left her to look after the classes, while he rode away to Whitehaven. [I think nothing can be more abominable than his treatment of her.] "She stood looking after me till I was up the hill." This contract took place at Hineley Hill. B. Hopper was a witness, and I suppose Mr. Perronet, as it appears from the

[1] pp. 10 to 27 of present edition.

Journal that he was there. The date was Thursday, the 21st of September, and yet on Saturday following he begins a letter from Whitehaven, "There is, I know not what, a sad presage that tells me we shall never meet again." [I hope the letter was not sent.]

He sent a copy of his letter to Bennet to his brother, the day after it was written. His brother was shocked at the thought that he was about to marry at all, but especially that he should think of marrying a servant, and one so lowly born; said it would appear shocking to all mankind, and would break up the Societies. The brother came down at once from Bristol to Leeds, when Robert Swindells and William Shent tell him that Grace Murray is engaged to Mr. Bennet. This angers him more, and he proceeds forward to Newcastle, taking with him Shent, who is as angry as himself. Here the brother meets Jane Keith, "a woman of strong sense and exquisite subtilty," long prejudiced against Grace Murray. She told him that Mr. Wesley was in love with her beyond all sense and reason. That he had shown it in the most public manner, and had avowed it to all the Society, and that all the town was in an uproar, and all the Societies ready to fly in pieces. His brother believing this, flies on with Shent to Whitehaven, expecting to find Wesley and Grace together. Wesley says he was not surprised when he saw him. The brother urged that all the Preachers would leave them and the Societies be broken up if he married so mean a woman, and that she was pre-engaged to J. Bennet. Wesley says that he looked to qualifications, not birth; and that he knew she was pre-engaged to him; but he seems to have said little, but to have proposed that the whole subject should be referred to Mr. Pert, to which the brother consented.

[The MS. is badly edited. The reasons he gives for marrying Grace, to prepare himself for the reference, end at "proper as this" at p. 40.[1] Then begins the narrative again.]

The brother spoken of was Charles, not Samuel.

September 26th and 27th, he goes from Whitehaven to Hineley Hill to preach. Hannah Broadwood, at whose house Wesley had left Grace, met him at a little distance from it, and told him that Mr. Charles had left two hours since and carried her behind him. They seem to have taken her to Newcastle. Wesley does not follow, but goes to Whitehaven for a preaching purpose, which place he reached on Saturday, the 30th of September.

On Monday, October 2nd, he received a letter from Mr. Whitefield pressing him to meet his brother and him at Leeds on Wednesday evening. At nine on Wednesday evening he reached Leeds. Here he found not his brother, only Mr. Whitefield, "who told me

[1] Present edition, p. 35.

my brother would not come till Mr. Bennet and Grace Murray were married. I was troubled. Thursday, the 5th, about eight, one came in from Newcastle and told me they were married on Tuesday. My brother came an hour after." The brother appears to have behaved exceedingly ill. Whitefield and Nelson sought to compose matters, praying, crying, and entreating, till the storm passed away. J. B., which must be Bennet, then came in. Neither of them could speak, but kissed each other and wept.

He then gives an account of what had been Grace's course in the few days which had passed since he left her at Hineley Hill. She had quite dismissed all thoughts of Bennet. On the Monday she wrote to S. Proctor, "If Mr. Bennet comes to Newcastle write to him immediately, for I must not see him; it will tear my soul to pieces, seeing I can by no means help him now; for whom God hath joined no man can put asunder." On Tuesday, the 26th, she was much in prayer and appeared exceedingly thankful to God, and more fixed every hour to live and die with me. On the 27th she was exceedingly troubled at my letter from Whitehaven. [Well she might be, poor soul!] About eleven my brother came; he kissed her, and said, "Grace Murray, you have broken my heart." Then he dropped down. Soon after the brother put into her hands a letter written the day before, of which a copy is given. It contains the usual argument against the marriage—her pre-contract with Bennet. She receives it as if written with John's consent, and so it cut off all hope of him. The brother asks her, "Are you willing to go with me to Leeds, to meet my brother and John Bennet there?" She consented. At one he took her behind him and set out. At first he designed to go by way of Newcastle, but they turned out of the Newcastle-road and made straight for Durham; but in a little time they lost their way, and were glad to lodge at T. Brown's, at Newland. Here she had a restless night.

In the morning they rode on to Ferry Hill, and were informed Bennet was at Newcastle. She cheerfully said, "Let us go—let us go to him!" But my brother being informed he had said he would have nothing to do with her, dropped her at Mr. Bell's, two miles short of the town, and went forward himself to reconcile him to her.

This he did by laying the whole blame upon Wesley, as having used art to seduce another man's wife. A strange scene amongst them all at Newcastle.

When Bennet was convinced the whole fault was mine, Grace and I were brought together. She fell at his feet, acknowledged that she had used him ill, and begged he would forgive her. A person was brought in who said I had given her up, and would have nothing more to say to her, only I had ordered him to procure

some place among the country societies where she might live privately. Upon this, some cried out, "Good God! what will the world say? He is tired of her, and so thrusts his whore into a corner. Sister Murray will you consent to this?" [What rascals these Methodists were.] She answered, "No! I will die first." So seeing no other way, she frankly declared, "I *will* have John Bennet if he will have *me*." On Tuesday morning, October 3rd, they were married. They all then rode on contentedly to Leeds to give me the meeting there, as well that I might have the pleasure of seeing the bride as that I might acknowledge my sin (those were my brother's expressions) before Mr. Bennet and them all.

But this I was not ready to do; neither did I apprehend that she desired my company any more, till on Friday, October 6th, I was informed both John Bennet and his wife desired to see me. He went. A strange interview; all weeping and praying.

Mr. Wesley ended with saying, "Hardly has such a case been from the beginning of the world."

He may justly say so, for it is a very remarkable case in many points of view.

I have now not the least doubt that the MS. is perfectly genuine. In all probability, in the disputes between Wesley and his wife it was taken possession of by the Vazell's—perhaps stolen by them—and possibly, also, with the idea that it might be said to prove such a pre-contract as would vitiate his marriage with Mrs. Vazell; or at least to show that Mrs. Vazell was not the only woman whose confidence he had abused.

It appears by the Journal that, on Monday, the 9th, and Tuesday, the 10th, he returned from Leeds to Newcastle, where it was that he composed the verses in which is an epitome of the whole affair.

> In 1803 there was printed at Macclesfield by G. Bayley, a small 8vo. volume, entitled "Memoirs of Mrs. Grace Bennet, lately deceased, relict of the Rev. John Bennet, of Chinley, Derbyshire, interspersed with some account of the Ministry and Death of Mr. Bennet; to which are subjoined extracts from her Diary, and a brief account of her Death, February 23rd, 1803, in the Eighty-ninth year of her age." By William Bennet.

He dates an Advertisement prefixed. "Stodard, August 26th, 1803." He gives as a reason for the publishing such a book, that a note was found among his mother's papers addressed to him, in May, 1798, in which she says that she had left behind some broken hints of her life for him to do with as he should see good. This would seem to promise something valuable, but it is one of the poorest books of its class.

The writer tells us that she was the daughter of Robert and Grace Norman, of Newcastle, Member of the Church of England, and born there 23rd January, 1715. The brief narrative which she left behind her must have been pretty much the same as that which she gave to Mr. Wesley. Here it is not so particular. At twenty-one she married Mr. Alexander Murray, nearly related to a considerable family in Scotland. His father had been concerned in the Rebellion of 1715, and was forfeited and banished. Alexander betook himself to a sea-faring life.

Mr. Bennet, it appears, was twenty-six when in Grace Murray's charge during an illness in the summer of 1746. Mention is made of her travelling on business of the Societies in the Northern Counties and in Ireland; but it is supposed that she travelled in company with Wesley, and it is said as a blind, and it would appear to have been by his directions.

On October 3rd, 1749, she was married in the Parish Church of St. Andrew, Newcastle, to Rev. John Bennet, of Chinley, in the presence of Rev. George Whitefield and Rev. Charles Wesley; but nothing is said of the extraordinary circumstances of the wedding.

Mr. Bennet was at that time a preacher in Mr. Wesley's connection, and superintended a large circuit in Yorkshire, Lancashire, Cheshire, and Derbyshire, in which it appears from a letter by him to Mr. Wesley, dated March 6th, 1750, that he rode nearly 200 miles every fortnight. Some diversities of religious opinion sprung up between him and Wesley, and they publicly separated at Boston, in Lincolnshire, April 3rd, 1752.

Bennet having been instructed in Divinity, studied under Dr. Latham at Findern for a little while; and giving up all thoughts of the Ministry, he became clerk to R. Bagshaw, Esq., a Justice of the Peace, which office he held till he was twenty-two. He then engaged in some business. In 1739, when about twenty-five, being at Sheffield, he was invited to hear David Taylor, an itinerant preacher out of Lancashire. He was struck with what he heard, and invited Taylor to visit the Peak, and travelled about with him there. Soon after this he became acquainted with Benjamin Ingham, of Aberford, whom also he introduced into Derbyshire, and travelled with him; so that he was the first instrument in bringing out some, afterwards called Methodists, into Derbyshire. He soon became thoroughly converted, and devoted himself wholly to ministerial work. June 2nd, 1742, he first heard John Wesley. It was at Dewsbury, and the next day he was introduced to him by John Nelson at Mirfield. April 15th, 1743, meeting Mr. John Wesley near Chesterfield, he was invited by him to London, Bristol, or Newcastle, and from that time entered into close connection with him as a preacher among the Methodists.

Not a word is said of the struggle between him and Wesley for Grace Murray; and the only allusion to anything of the kind is at p. 17, where it is said, "Few characters were more esteemed throughout all Mr. Wesley's connection than the subject of these Memoirs, and in real usefulness she equalled most of his preachers. He was wont to call her his right-hand, and there is good reason to believe that he intended to have married her."

The severance of her husband from Mr. Wesley was a great grief to her. The points of difference were on the imputation of the righteousness of Christ to believers as the only ground of their justification before God, which Mr. Bennet openly avowed, "together with some other occasion for uneasiness which need not here be repeated." There is a good notice of this in Wesley's Journal under March 31st in that year. Wesley says, "I have not been in connection with him these three years, neither will I be any more." This three years carries us back to March, 1749, six months and more before Bennet and Grace married.

The Memoir goes on to say that this separation was a great grief to Grace, who had the highest veneration for the character of Mr. Wesley, whom she always honoured as her spiritual father, though she thought his conduct on that occasion highly reprehensible. She was then also a warm stickler for universal redemption, free will, &c., which were topics of a warm controversy at the time between Mr. Wesley and Mr. Whitefield, Mr. Bennet siding with the latter. In time she saw reason to embrace what was called Calvanistic views of Gospel doctrines. Not fond, however, of controversy.

Mr. Bennet with a young family, now found travelling inconvenient, and in 1754 a Meeting-house was erected for him at Warburton, in Cheshire, where an Independent Society was purposely organised, and he was appointed Pastor. Here he continued his Ministerial labours every Lord's day, generally preaching four or five times in the week, besides, in places at some distance; but in 1759 he became seriously ill, and after lying in that state thirty-six weeks, died on May 24th.

Grace was left with five sons, the eldest not eight years old. She had many trials. She lived a very religious life, and was an excellent mother. Improved herself much by reading. Had weekly prayer-meetings at her house, and encouraged ministers to come and preach there. Paid attention to her sick neighbours.

She lived in what her son calls a "sequestered vale;" but when those of her children who lived were grown up, she left it and settled in the town of Chapel le Frith, where, after some time, she again entered into society with the people called Methodists in Mr. Wesley's connection, and had regular weekly class-meetings in her house.

In 1792 she began to keep a Diary, which she continued to 1800, when her eye-sight failed.

Then follow extracts from her Diary; matters of feeling and opinion, not facts, and too like all writings of this kind.

We have an account of her pious end; and at the close, a hymn of her composing.

In 1849 the Journal of Charles Wesley was printed. The editor has suppressed the part from September 15th, 1749, when the writer was ill with a sore throat, to October 22nd, when he was at Bristol. This looks disingenious, and it is not atoned for by the note at vol. i, p. 224, where is a letter to Grace Murray (May, 1740). "To this lady Mr. Wesley afterwards made an offer of marriage. She was prevailed upon by Mr. Charles Wesley to marry John Bennet, one of the Itinerant Preachers." This Journal corroborates the MS. incidentally. Indeed, there can be no doubt of its genuineness. The handwriting of the poem shows it to be Wesley's, and the corrections and interlineations that it is a first or second draft. I saw it this day in the Museum, September 12th, 1853.

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